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FICTION HOUSE
52 Pages
MAGAZINES
VOYAGE TO THE WONDER-WORLD
OF TOMORROW WITH
MYSTA OF THE MOON
STAR PIRATE • FUTURA
SPACE RANGERS AND MANY OTHERS

A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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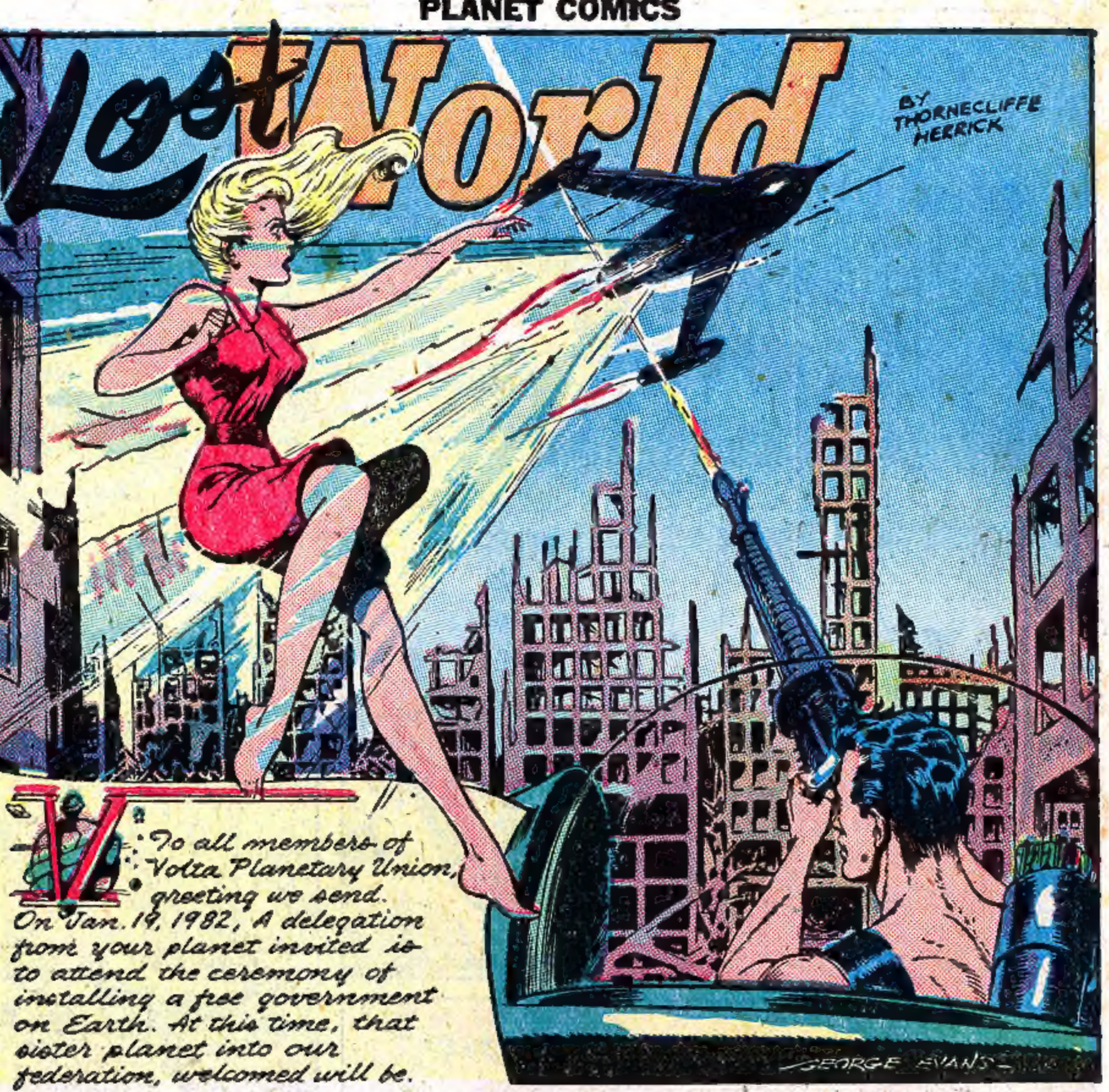
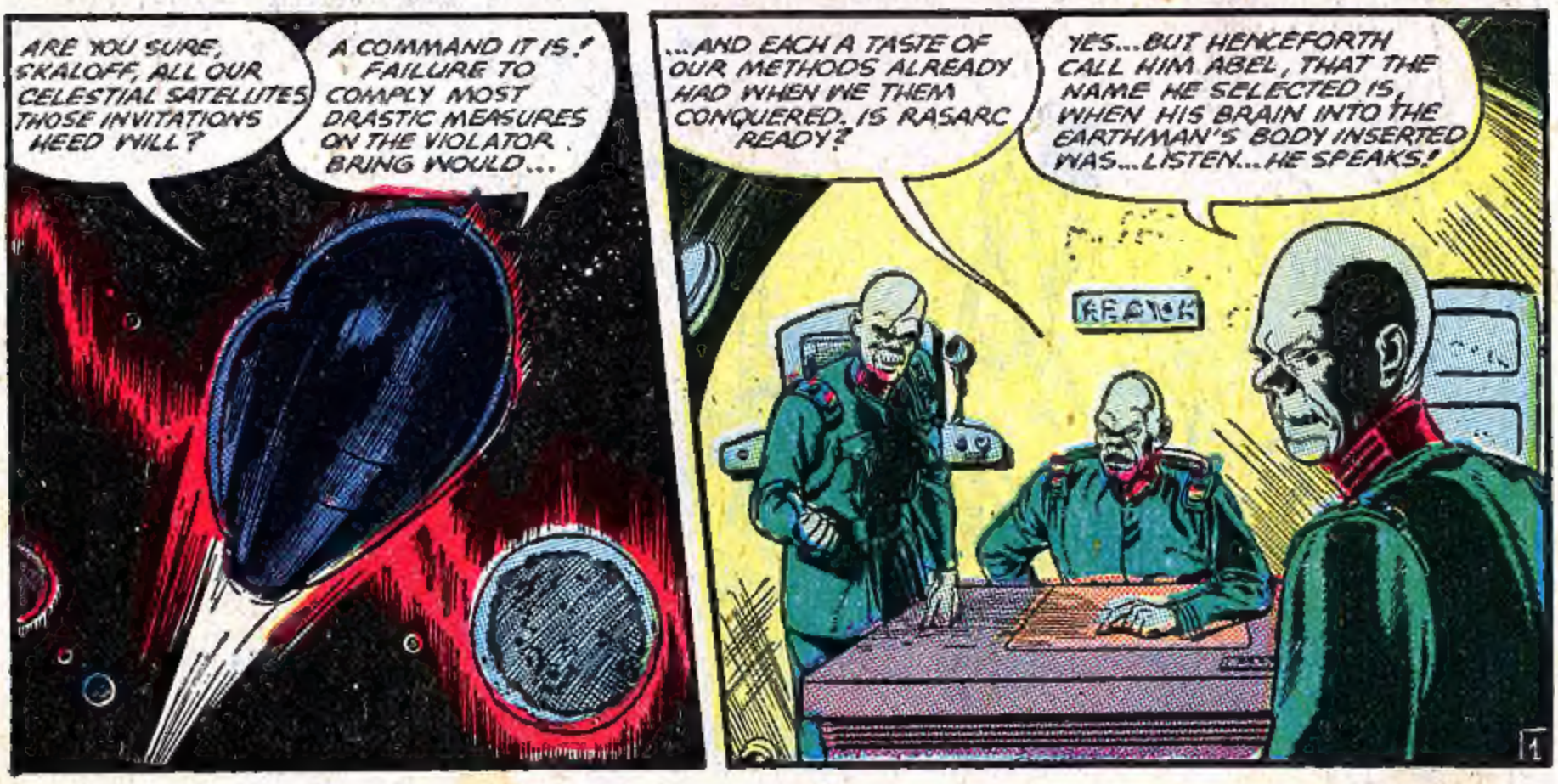
Lost World

BY THORNECLIFFE HERRICK



"To all members of Volta Planetary Union, greeting we send. On Jan. 19, 1982, A delegation from your planet invited is to attend the ceremony of installing a free government on Earth. At this time, that sister planet into our federation, welcomed will be.


ARE YOU SURE, SKALOFF, ALL OUR CELESTIAL SATELLITES THOSE INVITATIONS HEED WILL?
A COMMAND IT IS! FAILURE TO COMPLY MOST DRASTIC MEASURES ON THE VIOLATOR BRING WOULD...
...AND EACH A TASTE OF OUR METHODS ALREADY HAD WHEN WE THEM CONQUERED. IS RASARC READY?
YES...BUT HENCEFORTH CALL HIM ABEL, THAT THE NAME HE SELECTED IS, WHEN HIS BRAIN INTO THE EARTHMAN'S BODY INSERTED WAS...LISTEN...HE SPEAKS!
RASARC
1

WE WILL ENCIRCLE EARTH AT TWO THOUSAND FEET ALTITUDE. I WILL OPERATE THE VISO-EJECTOR..

I WANT ALL EARTH PEOPLE TO SEE OUR MESSAGE. IT WILL BRING THEM TO THE MEETING.

BUT THAT MAN BOWMAN AND HIS COMPANION LYSSA OPPOSE US MIGHT.

PERHAPS...BUT WITH HIM WE LATER DEAL WILL. ALL OTHERS THE CHANCE FOR PEACE UNDER ABEL'S LEADERSHIP WELCOME WILL.

YES. AND GRADUALLY I WILL MAKE EARTH INTO A VASSAL STATE. THEY WILL NEVER SUSPECT I AM A VOLTAMAN.

TRUE, ABEL, AH... THE ELECTRO-WRITING GLOWS. NO ONE MISS IT CAN.

EARTHMEN!

AS BELOW, ON EARTH...

AT LAST THAT'S DONE. DO YOU THINK IT WILL RUN?

START IT UP, BOWMAN. WE'LL SOON FIND OUT.

A GOOD JOB. LISTEN TO THAT OLD VOLTA MOTOR PURR, LYSSA.

I HEAR IT, BUT LOOK UP THERE... LOOK!

IT'S A VOLTA SPACER...AND IT'S WAITING...

IS IT A TRICK, LYSSA? I CAN'T THINK OF A LOYAL EARTHMAN AGREEING TO PEACE WITH THEM.

NOR I. I KNOW ONLY THAT YOU, HUNT BOWMAN, ARE OUR TRUE LEADER. WE MUST GO THERE AND FIND OUT WHAT'S BEHIND THIS.

MEANWHILE ALL VOLTA-SUBJECTED PLANETS HAVE HASTENED TO OBEY THE COMMAND INVITATION AND THE HEAVENS ARE STUDDED WITH SPACESHIPS SPEEDING TOWARD EARTH. ON THE ONE FROM BROODUN, THE SUNLESS PLANET, THE TRAVELLERS CROWD AROUND THE VIDEO...

I LIKE NOT THIS VOYAGE, BEETLE..FOR SHOULD THE SUN'S RAYS TOUCH OUR BODIES, WE DIE. YES, WE WERE FOOLS TO COME.

BUT GREATER FOOLS IF WE HAD REFUSED, AND THUS INVITED THE VOLTA WRATH TO STRIKE OUR TINY PLANET. CAN'T SEE ANYTHING IN THE VIDEO?

NOT YET, FOR THOUGH 'TIS DARKENED, THIS CURSED LIGHT DOES HURT MY EYES.

WE WERE STUPID NOT TO HAVE BROUGHT A PRESENT FOR THE NEW RULER. IT WOULD HAVE WON THE VOLTANS' FAVOR!

AYE, SO WE SHOULD... BUT LOOK!... WHAT THINGS ARE THOSE?

EARTHPEOPLE! WE SHALL PLUCK ONE UP TO PRESENT TO THE VOLTAMEN! QUICK, DON LIGHT DEFLECTO SUITS! ADJUST MAGNO-RAY MACHINE!

QUICK, PUT ON THE HELMET BEFORE WE OPEN THE HATCH.

WHILE BELOW, NEAR THE RECONDITIONED TANK...

LOOK, HUNT, THAT STRANGE SPACER'S DIVING TOWARD US!

QUICK, HIDE IN THE RUINS!

I'M GOING TO TRY TO HIT IT WITH THESE TANK GUNS. RUN, LYSSA, RUN!

HELP, HUNT! I'M HELPLESS... SOME FORCE IS PULLING ME UP! HELP!

WELL DONE... THE SPECIMEN IS OURS, CLOSE THE HATCH! TURN OFF THE MAGNO-RAY.

AYE, BEETLE, THE VOLTAMEN WILL BE WELL PLEASED WITH THIS GIFT.

YOU'RE GOING TO TURN ME OVER TO THE VOLTAMEN? YOU COWARDS! LET GO OF ME!

TOO LATE... HUNT'S TRYING TO SHOOT THIS SHIP DOWN. BUT IT'S TOO HIGH... I'M BEING DRAWN STRAIGHT INTO IT!

WHO ARE YOU? WHY DO YOU TAKE ME PRISONER?

WE ARE FROM BROODUN, AND WEAR THESE SUITS TO PROTECT US FROM YOUR SUN'S RAYS. AS FOR YOU- YOU ARE TO BE A GIFT TO OUR MASTER!

AND SO, THE SHIP SPEEDS ON TOWARD NEW YORK, AND BEHIND, HUNT BOWMAN RAGES HELPLESSLY..

LYSSA KIDNAPPED! BUT I'LL FOLLOW THEM TO THE END OF THE UNIVERSE TO SAVE HER!

NEW YORK'S THEIR DESTINATION. THEY'LL ATTEND THAT FAKE INSTALLATION OF AN EARTH LEADER. WILL YOU FOLLOW ME?

YES, HUNT BOWMAN. WE RECOGNIZE YOU ALONE AS OUR LIBERATOR.

THIS IS THE SUREST AND FASTEST WAY.. WE'VE GOT TO FIND LYSSA!

YES, AND UNMASK THE EARTHMAN WHO THE VOLTANS HAVE SELECTED TO LEAD US INTO SLAVERY. WEAVE NO!

WHILE, AT THE BATTERY ON THE LOWER TIP OF MANHATTEN ISLAND, A COLORFUL DISPLAY OF TENTS DOTS THE IMPROVISED LANDING FIELD...

...AND FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE A CONSTANT STREAM OF SPACESHIPS COMES STREAKING IN...

...AS FROM ONE OF THEM, THE VOLTAMEN, RASARC, UNDER EARTHMAN'S GUISE, AND BEARING THE NAME OF ABEL, STRUTS FORTH...

IS EVERYTHING READY? HAVE THE DELEGATES ARRIVED?

YES, AND THEY YOUR PLEASURE AWAIT.

I WILL GREET THEM AND THEN WE WILL HAVE THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY.

THIS WAY... AND THAT YOU A VOLTAMAN ARE THEY SUSPECT MUST NOT!

SO THE FARCE PROCEEDS. EACH DELEGATION WELCOMING EARTH'S NEWLY DESIGNATED LEADER INTO THE FEDERATION... A LEAGUE DOMINATED AND DICTATED TO BY THE VOLTA WAR LORDS. SOLEMNLY THE GREEN-NOSED JUPITERIANS, THE WINGED URANIUSIANS, AND THE MIDGET NEPTUNIANS SALUTE THEM... AND NEXT TO THE MARTIAN SHIP WHERE...

THE NAME OF ABEL WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE GREAT EARTH LIBERATOR.

THEN TO THE VENUSIANS...

LONG LIVE YOUR REIGN, ABEL. NOW EXCUSE ME WHILE I MOISTEN MY SKIN... YOUR DRY CLIMATE SHRINKS IT, YOU KNOW.

AND AT THE OCTOPODUS PAVILLION...

WELCOME, SILENT ONES. WE UNDERSTAND YOUR GESTURES OF HOMAGE.

WE SAW THE BROADCAST, AND CAME. BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT HAPPENED TO HUNT BOWMAN? HE WAS OUR LEADER!

FINALLY TO WHERE THE EARTHMEN GATHER...

HE WAS A FOOL NOT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE VOLTA MEN FROM NOW ON WE WILL LIVE IN PEACE.

MEANWHILE, BUFFETTED BY WIND AND RAIN, HUNT BOWMAN'S TINY CREW STRUGGLE VALIANTLY PAST SANDY HOOK...

WE'RE EXHAUSTED, HUNT. LET'S LAND BEFORE WE'RE SWAMPED AND DROWNED.

NO! WE MUST KEEP ON. LYSSA'S LIFE IS AT STAKE AND SO IS THE FREEDOM OF OUR WORLD, FOR I'M SURE THAT EARTHMAN ABEL IS AN IMPOSTOR!

AND AHEAD, INSIDE A SILKEN CANOPY...

ALL THE SATELLITE DELEGATIONS ARE PRESENT, EXCEPT THE WEAK-EYED ONES FROM BRODDUN.

THE HEAVENS SCAN, I WILL, ABEL, TO SEE IF APPROACH THEY DO.

YES, THEY COME. NO ONE WOULD DARE REFUSE **OUR** INVITATION. ESPECIALLY THOSE SPINELESS ONES WHO LIVE ON THE SUNLESS SPHERE. GO AND GREET THEM.

AS, INSIDE THAT CRAFT...

IF YOU LET ME GO, HUNT BOWMAN, OUR EARTH LEADER WILL REWARD YOU.

THOU ART MISTAKEN, EARTHGIRL. ABEL IS YOUR LEADER, AND 'TIS TO HIM WE CARRY THEE.

IT'S A LIE! WE ON EARTH DON'T KNOW THIS MAN ABEL WHO THE VOLTA MEN ARE TRYING TO FORCE UPON US! HE MUST BE A PUPPET WHO SOLD OUT TO THEM!

SPEAK THEE NO ILL OF THE VOLTA MEN! THEY ARE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, AND SO WE OBEY THEM. NOW I MUST DON THIS SUN-PROOF SUIT, FOR WE NEAR THE LANDING.

WELCOME, BROTHERS... WE BRING A GIFT FOR ABEL... NEW LORD OF EARTH.

GOOD... LATER YOU TO HIM GIVE. THERE YOUR TENT IS!

SOON, HUNT BOWMAN'S CRAFT GLIDES SILENTLY ALONGSIDE AN ANCIENT HULK MOORED AT THE BATTERY...

NO NOISE... I'LL CLIMB THE MAST AND SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

THERE'S LYSSA! THEY'RE TAKING HER TO ONE OF THE TENTS. WE CAN SLIP UP THERE WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

AND WHAT SECONDS LATER...

SHHH... THEY'VE GOT HER INSIDE... I CAN HEAR HER VOICE.

AS...

YOU AND ALL THE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED HERE ARE NOTHING BUT VOLTAN VASSALS.

ENOUGH, EARTHGIRL! THE MEETING IS READY AND THOU SHALL COME WITH US.

SO THIS IS THE END. HUNT BOWMAN'S DREAM OF SOMEDAY FREEING EARTH WILL DIE WHEN THE EARTH PEOPLE EMBRACE ABEL'S REIGN...

WHILE...

I'VE SLIT THE TENT... QUICK, THEIR GUARD SEES US! LET'S GET THEM!

OUT OF THE WAY, LYSSA... WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE WHITE-LIVERED DEVILS!

NO, HUNT! THEY'RE ARMED! THEY'LL KILL YOU!

MEANWHILE, ON THE ROSTRUM OVERLOOKING THE ASSEMBLY...

THE GREAT VOLTA LORDS HAVE AGREED TO CEASE PLUNDERING OUR PLANET, AND I, IN TURN, HAVE PROMISED TO COLLABORATE WITH THEM.

VOLTA

SO WE JOIN THE GREAT UNION OF VOLTA PLANETS AND WELCOME THE DELEGATION HERE.

THIS MAN ABEL TALKS SENSE... WE WILL HAVE PEACE ONCE MORE.

IF WE DON'T HAVE TO SACRIFICE OUR FREEDOM, WE SHOULD SUPPORT HIM.

AS, INSIDE THE TENT...

YOU ARE BROODUNS AND LIVE ON A SUNLESS PLANET...

...AND WHEN THE VOLTA MEN ATTACKED, INSTEAD OF RESISTING, YOU MEEKLY SURRENDERED. AND NOW YOU FAWN AT THEIR FEET!

NO, EARTHMAN, THOU CANNOT STOP ME...

FOR I WILL KILL THY COMRADE FIRST!

HERE, I'LL TAKE THAT GUN!

HUNT... YOU'VE BEATEN THEM!

YES, BUT THERE'S ANOTHER JOB AHEAD. WE'VE GOT TO UNMASK THAT MAN ABEL AND PROVE TO THE EARTH PEOPLE HE IS AN IMPOSTOR!

BUT HOW CAN WE DO IT, HUNT? THE VOLTA MEN HAVE A THOUSAND HENCHMEN!

AND WE ARE BUT A HANDFUL. STILL, WE MUST TRY. FOR IF WE FAIL, OUR PLANET BECOMES A SERFDOM!

As, WITH A FINAL BURST OF ELOQUENCE, THE PUPPET RULER GESTURES WILDLY.

ALL HONOR TO THE VOLTAMEN WHO COULD HAVE CONQUERED US, BUT CHOSE INSTEAD TO GIVE US OUR FREEDOM.

GOOD SPEECH THAT IS, ABEL. AND NOW THE BROODUNS A PRESENT FOR YOU BRING.

HAIL TO YOU, NEW LEADER OF EARTH! WE BRING YOU LYSSA, WHO FOUGHT WITH HUNT BOWMAN AGAINST THE VOLTAMEN.

SO, THIS IS ONE OF THE TERRORISTS' LEADERS. SHE SHALL PAY FOR HER CRIMES.

YOU DARE CALL IT A CRIME TO RESIST THESE INHUMAN FIENDS?

YOU ARE A TRAITOR! YOU SELL OUR FREEDOM FOR POWER!

QUICK, COMRADES, THIS GIRL GRAB! SHE MURDER ME WILL!

LISTEN! HE SPEAKS IN THE VOLTA TONGUE! HE IS ONE OF THEM MASQUERADING IN AN EARTHMAN'S BODY! SHOOT!

MEANWHILE, UNSEEN BY THE OTHERS, HUNT BOWMAN RUSHES TO A NEARBY SPACESHIP...

LYSSA HAS UNMASKED HIM... THIS IS MY CHANCE!

EVERYTHING'S IN CONFUSION... BUT I CAN'T OPEN FIRE UNTIL LYSSA AND THOSE EARTH PEOPLE IN THE BROODUNS' COSTUMES GET AWAY!

GOOD! SHE'S SEEN ME, AND HAS STARTED TO RUN. NOW I'LL TEACH THOSE VOLTA DEVILS NOT TO TRY TO PULL ANY MORE TRICKS ON US!

AS BELOW...

HUNT'S STARTED TO DRIVE LYSSA ME'LL PUMP OUT THE ENTIRE CONVENTION!

YES... WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE EARTHMEN'S DELEGATION AND WARN THEM. AH THERE THEY ARE

WHILE ON THE AUSTRIUM

OUR PLANS RUINED! I'LL BE UNLESS THAT SHIP YOU BLAST!

IT THAT CURSED HUNT BOWMAN IS! OOH!

RUN! YOU'VE BEEN TRICKED INTO COMING HERE! HUNT BOWMAN'S IN THAT SPACER AND HE'S GOING TO ATTACK!

YES, LYSSA, LEAD THE WAY!

AND LATER NEAR THE CHARRED AND SMOKING DEBRIS

HUNT YOU'VE WIPED OUT THE VOLTAMEN AND THEIR EVIL SATELLITES!

YES, LYSSA, AND YOU'RE SAFE. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LET YOU GO ON THAT PLATFORM WITH ABEL AND HIS HENCHMEN

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY WE COULD EXPOSE HIM AS A FRAUD TO THE EARTHPEOPLE FROM NOW ON, THEY WILL NEVER QUESTION BUT THAT YOU ARE OUR TRUE LEADER, HUNT BOWMAN!

BUT WITHOUT YOU, LYSSA, I NEVER COULD OR WOULD WANT TO CARRY ON THE FIGHT!

Futura

BY JOHN DOUGLAS

HAUNTING SHADOWS FLIT FUTURA'S MIND AND SHE WRITHES IN MENTAL ANGUISH...SO NEAR SHE WAS TO PROVING FALSE THE CHARGE OF PIRACY AGAINST HER...THEN TO BE TRICKED BY OMMA AND YRINA! AND NOW SHE STRAINS AT CREAKING CHAINS—THEIR PRISONER! AND LISTENS TO THEM GLOAT AS THEY NEAR THE TINY WATER PLANET. **OCEANIA** ..

IT IS OMMA AT THE CONTROLS WHO SHOUTS IN EXHORTATION, "DIRECTIONAL BUOY SIGHTED! STAND BY TO LAND! UNLATCH OUR CAPTIVE'S FETTERS!"

AND AS YRINA EXECUTES THE ORDER OMMA MANEUVERS A TANGENT SPEED THE SHIP SKIRTS THE MARKER AND SPINGS INTO THE OZONE CHANNEL.

WONDERINGLY, FUTURA PEERS AHEAD, ANXIOUS TO SIGHT THEIR DESTINATION... WHILE YRINA FETCHES HELMETS...

THEN OMMA SHOUTS, LOOK! THE BEAM! ALL IS WELL!"

FOR TOWERS LOOM AHEAD. THESE ARE THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FISHERMEN.

...WHO TRAFFIC IN ILLEGAL OODITIES, SALVAGED FROM THE DEPTHS BELOW.

AND INSIDE THE LOOKOUT, SHOUTS OF RECOGNITION AS OMMA'S SHIP IS SIGHTED ON THE VIDEO. "OUR BEST CUSTOMER APPROACHES!" ONE EXULTS.

"YES, HE PAYS IN GOLD, AND NO QUESTIONS ASKED! PILOT, GUIDE HIM IN!"

AND THAT WORTHY EXPERTLY TWISTS DIALS AND KNOBS, CALLS THE CODE WORD INTO THE RADIO-BEAM

AND BACK TO HIS EARS COMES OMMA'S ANSWER, "THIS TIME WE BRING A CAPTIVE NAMED FUTURA. WE ARE COATING HER BODY WITH A NEW AQUA-RESISTANT, AND WILL LOWER HER TWO HUNDRED FATHOMS DEEP... A MOST INTERESTING EXPERIMENT— WHAT!"

THEN ONLY INCOHERENT CRACKLINGS STRUM THAT LOOKOUT'S EARPHONES, FOR FUTURA HAS HEARD THOSE WORDS— AND LEAPS...

"SO YOU'D USE ME AS A HUMAN GUINEA PIG!" SHE SCREAMS, "BUT NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!"

YRINA SNATCHES UP HER RAY GUN, "LET GO OR I SHOOT!" SHE SCREAMS!

"FIRE! FIRE!" OMMA THUNDERS AT YRINA. "SHE'S GONE MAD!"

INSTANTLY THE PIRATE QUEEN OBEYS, BUT FUTURA HAS LURCHED ASIDE...

AND THE RAY PUNCHES TRUE... STRAIGHT AT OMMA— STRIKES, THEN SPLASHES!

THE CONTROL-MAN IN THE TOWER SEES THE SHIP IN WILD AND CROOKED GYRATIONS

SO SHRIEKS WARNING, "THEY WILL CRASH US!"

...ALL PREPARE TO MEET THEIR GOD...THE GOD SO RECENTLY THEY FLAUNTED

AS INSIDE, NOT KNOWING THAT THE FALLEN OMMA HAS TRIPPED THE CONTROLS, FUTURA BELABORS THE PLEADING YRINA, "THING OF EVIL, NOW I WILL CONQUER YOU!"

WILDLY, THE CAREENING CRAFT STORMS CLOSER...

...THEN SUDDENLY VEERS FROM ITS PATH AND SKIRTS THE TOWER

AND AS YRINA PLEADS FOR MERCY, THE SHIP POINTS DOWNWARD...

...PLUNGES INTO THE SEA.. AND ALL ABOARD LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS.

DOWN, DOWN, DOWN IT SINKS TO THE BOTTOM WHERE THE WATER PRESSURE SPLITS THE SEAMS .. THEN RUSHES IN TO ENVELOPE AND DESTROY!

THE BRIEF SHOCK PASSES. FUTURA AWAKENS AS THE COLD WATER CARESSES HER FLESH. "WHAT HAPPENED?"

THEN INSTANT REALIZATION. "I MUST GET HELMETS, HELP YRINA AND ESCAPE!"

MADDENINGLY SLOW IS THE MANEUVER, FOR YRINA IS HELPLESS...AND ALWAYS, THE WATER IS PUSHING THEM BACKWARD.

THE ESCAPE HATCH JUST AHEAD!" FUTURA MURMURS. "I WILL MAKE IT!"

"SUCCESS! WE ARE FREE. WE ARE ON THE OCEAN BOTTOM."

"WAKE UP, YRINA." I SEE THE OUTLINE OF THE TOWER JUST AHEAD!"

BUT THE PIRATE QUEEN IS HELPLESS, SO FUTURA STAGGERS FORWARD WITH HER INERT BURDEN.

AT LAST THEY REACH THE BECKONING BEACON...

FRANTICALLY, FUTURA POUNDS THE PORTHOLE. "LET US IN... PLEASE LET US IN!"

BUT INSIDE, THE FISHERMEN GESTURE WILDLY. "LOOK BEHIND YOU - RUN!"

"OPEN! OPEN!" FUTURA PLEADS. BUT ALL IN VAIN AS SUDDENLY, SLITHERING MONSTERS DART FROM THE MUCK AND MIRE.

AND SLIMY TENTACLES REACH FOR HER AND SHE SCREAMS AGAIN AND AGAIN. "THE RAY GUN" SHE MURMURS.

AND YANKS IT FROM ITS HOLSTER.

A BELCH OF FLAME FUMES THROUGH THE WATER AND ONE WOUNDED SEA BEAST SQUEALS ITS DEATH CRY...

AND FROM THE SWAYING FOLIAGE, STRANGE LIZARD MEN COME RACING SHOUTING EXULTATIONS

OUR BOLOSTRINGS HAVE CAUGHT HER— SHE IS OURS!

AH CHRIST! THE EARTH GIRL GASPS, THEN TURNS AND FLEES... BUT SOMETHING FOLLOWS... FOOT-FALLS SOUND BEHIND HER... HER EYES LONE FIEND...

WHILE, INSIDE THE DOME, THE FISHERMEN WATCH, "NOW WE CAN TAKE THEM" ONE EXCLAIMS.

"YES, TURN ON THE ATTRACTO-RAY, DRAW THOSE SPECIMENS INTO OUR TANK!"

AS OUTSIDE FUTURA STRUGGLES TO FLY BUT THE BLASTS NOS PARALYZE HER LIMBS

"IS THIS THE END?" SHE WONDERS AS THE LIZARD MEN GRASP HER.

BUT SUDDENLY THE ATTRACTO-RAY SPLITS THE SEARING WATERS, GRASPS FUTURA AND HER CAPTORS, DRAWS THEM SWIFTLY TOWARD THE TOWER

AND SPINS THEM DOWN INTO A DARK PIT. SHE GASPS, AS SEE "GOOD FORTUNE, I AM SAVED!"

JOYFULLY, SHE SPRINGS TO HER FEET. "YOU ARE KIND, PUTURA, THANK YOU FOR FREEING ME" SHE CRIES..

... BUT THERE IS NO WELCOME ANSWER INSTEAD, THE CAPTAIN STRIDES FORTH, "THIS GIRL IS MINE! LET NO MAN DARE DEFY ME!"

FUTURA appears in every issue of PLANET COMICS!

STAR PIRATE

BY LEN DOOSON

"CARGO SHIPS MISSING IN OUTER VOID X!" WAS THE GRIM MESSAGE BEING FLASHED THROUGHOUT THE INTERPLANETARY SPACEPORTS! HOW DID THEY DISAPPEAR, WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE? WHERE DID THEY GO? IT WAS TO LEARN THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS THAT STAR PIRATE, ROBIN HOOD OF THE SPACE LANES, WATCHED AND WAITED, AS...

WELL, MASTER-MIND, WHERE'S ALL THIS SALVAGE LOOT WE WERE GONNA GET, HUH?

HMM... THE CARGO SHIPS MUST BE DETOURING THIS AREA AND — WAIT! THE RADAR-SCOPE'S REGISTERING...

SURE ENOUGH, STAR OLE BOY! LOOK, A NICE, BIG, FAT FREIGHTER COMIN' OUR WAY!

YEAH. LISTEN, THEY'RE TRYING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH US.

Leonard Starr

IDC! IDC! WE NEED HELP! JET PROPULSOS LAGGING! IDC!

IDC! INTERPLANETARY DISTRESS CALL! QUICK, BLACKY, SWITCH ON THE VIZI-SCREEN!

AT LAST! THIS IS THE CARGO SHIP, LORD OF NEPTUNE. WE'RE OUT OF TRITON, CARRYING METALLO-MIRZIUM - OH PLEASE HELP US - YOU MUST!

HMM...FUNNY THAT GAL SHOULD BE ON A CARGO SHIP... FACE LOOKS FAMILIAR, TOO!

WELL, WELL! A PRETTY LASS WITH A NICE LOAD O' MIRZIUM - AHEM! OUR SPECIALTY, EH, STAR?

QUIET, WOLF! TELL YOUR PILOT TO TAP HIS REPRESSOR PLATES, WHILE WE PARALLEL YOUR COURSE, MISS!

OUT ABOARD THE "STRICKEN" FREIGHTER, AS THE VIZI-SCREEN IS SNAPPED OFF..

SO! THE CLEVER STAR PIRATE FELL FOR MY RUSE, ALEXO! NOW WE'LL GET THE ANSWER TO THESE MISSING CARGO SHIPS! FLIP UP THE HULL PLATES AND GIVE 'EM A BROADSIDE!

CHECK, FURA!

SWIFTLY, THE CAMOUFLAGE-PLATES CLATTER AND THE UGLY SHOUTS OF SPACE GUNS BRISTLE..

OKAY, STAR - WE'RE... LOOK! IT'S A SPACE POLICE SHIP! WE'RE TRAPPED!

I KNEW IT! THAT GAL IS FURA, THE NEW ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER! SHIFT TO VERTICAL CLIMB - WE'LL TRY TO RUN...

FACE LICE ROL

BUT...

TOO LATE, STAR! THEY'VE ZAPPED OUR CONTROL FINS!

YEAH - AND THE HULL'S CAVING IN! BUT I'M NOT LICKED YET! KEEP 'ER GOING!

AS BELOW ON A LITTLE KNOWN ASTEROID.

AH! THE MAGNETIC IMPULSATOR REGISTERS A SPACE SHIP IN OUR AREA!

ATTENTION! MAN THE VORTEX RAY AT ONCE!

SPACE SHIP LOCATED WITHIN OUR CONTROL ORBIT!

LISTEN! ORDERS FROM OUR MASTER, ZARÖTH! START THE ENGINES, HURRY!

MEANWHILE...

FULL JET BLAST! KEEP THIS TIN CAN ON THE MOVE! THAT BADGE-HAPPY GAL ISN'T GOING TO TAKE ME THAT EASILY!

FINE WORDS, ME BUCKO! BUT IT LOOKS LIKE OUR GOOSE IS COOKED! WE'RE JUST FLOATIN'!

POWER'S GONE, EH? THEN WE'LL FIGHT! C'MON!

WAIT, STAR- WE'RE MOVIN' FASTER! FEELS LIKE WE'RE CAUGHT IN A VACUM OR SOMETHIN'. LOOK!

WHAT THE - AN ELECTRO-VORTEX SPIRAL RAY! BUT THEY'VE BEEN OUTLAWED!

WELL, OUTLAWED OR NOT, WE'RE BEIN' DRAWN RIGHT SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF IT!

SLOWLY, BUT SURELY, THE RIPPED AND BATTERED HULK THAT WAS ONCE STAR PIRATE'S SPACER IS DRAWN INTO THE SWIRLING MAELSTROM..

AND BELOW...

HERE IT COMES, RUK! JUST AS A THOUSAND OTHER CARGO SHIPS HAVE COME, EH?

AYE, ZAROTH! WE'VE NEED OF A GOOD HAUL! GET IT, MEN!

USE PARA-RAYS - WE DO NOT WANT TO KILL THEM - YET!

CHECK - BUT LOOK! THEY'RE GOING TO FIGHT!

WAIT, BLACKY, DON'T SHOOT! TOO MANY OF THEM AND AND BESIDES, I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND THIS!

GOOD THING I BROUGHT MY IMAGE PROJECTOR - I'LL BIDE MY TIME!

WHAT? THEY'RE BLASTIN' US WITH PARA-RAYS - UH...

GOOD WORK, MEN! NAILED THEM BOTH! GRAB 'EM— THE RAY STUNS FOR ONLY A SEKO!

WELL, WELL! ZAROTH! WHEN DID THEY RELEASE YOU FROM THE PRISON PLANET, YOU CROOK?

PAH! STAR PIRATE! NO CARGO HAUL THIS TIME, BOYS. BUT I'VE GOT AN OLD SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THIS BIRD! PUT 'EM IN THE CELL.

AS, ABOARD THE POLICE CRUISER...

THERE—PERHAPS YOU CAN TELL BETTER ON THE ILLUMINATED MAP GRID. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, FURA?

IT'S MOST STRANGE— THEY'VE DISAPPEARED COMPLETELY!

GOT 'IM! NO FUNNY BUSINESS, YOU!

HOLD IT, FATSO, BEFORE I BREAK YOUR NECK. OKAY, ZAROTH, HERE THEY ARE!

BUT THEY CAN'T BE FAR! ALEXO, SET COURSE FOR TWO-ZERO-ONE, BISECTED BY TANGENT XZ. WE'LL SURELY OVERTAKE STAR PIRATE! I MUST HAVE HIM! I *MUST*!

BUT WE'VE HELD THAT EXACT COURSE SINCE WE BLASTED HIM! WAIT— DO YOU FEEL THAT PULL?

OH! REVERSE EMERGENCY ROCKETS, QUICKLY!

TOO LATE! WE'RE BEING DRAWN INTO A VORTEX!

AND INTO THE IRRESISTIBLE WHIRLPOOL PLUNGES THE POLICE SHIP!

NICE MESS 'AND OF ALL PEOPLE IT'S GOTTA BE SUNG GUY YOU SENT TO THE CLINK AND WHO MAKES REVENGE A HOBBY! GOT ANY IDEAS?

HMM... MY PROJECTO-IMAGE RAY...

CALL THE GUARD— QUICKLY! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING! I-I'M SICK! SICK!

HEY, GUARD! GUARD! MY PAL'S SICK— CALL A MEDICO! HURRY-HURRY!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH—LOOK, HE'S ONLY A FOOT HIGH! WHAT IS THIS?

FER THE LUVVA PETE! A MIDGET! ER HE SUFFERS FROM AM MALNUTRITION AND—WHAT?

3...

LOOK, ZAROTH! WE DIDN'T PULL A DUD THIS TIME!

NO'AN HONEST-TO GOODNESS FREIGHTER, AND IT LOOKS LOADED WITH LOOT!

WHAT KIND OF A TRICK IS THIS? I—OOF!

NO TRICK—JUST A PROJECTION OF MY IMAGE, BUB, WHICH I CAN CONTROL TO ANY SIZE! IT GIVES ME THE DIVERSION I NEED TO DO THIS!

BUT INSIDE THE SHIP...

QUICKLY, ALEXO, RELEASE THE CAMOUFLAGE PLATES— READY THE PORT GUNS FOR MAXIMUM BLAST POWER!

WAIT, FURA! THE PLATES— TH-THEY'RE JAMMED. I CAN'T RAISE 'EM! LISTEN! THAT VOICE!

ATTENTION! I AM KEEPING A FORCE RAY ON YOUR SHIP! THIS IS ZAROTH TALKING— SURRENDER PEACEFULLY AND YOUR ULTIMATE FATES WILL BE THAT MUCH EASIER FOR ALL OF YOU!

OON...

WELL! FURA, THE NEWLY APPOINTED ASSISTANT POLICE COMMISSIONER, EH? HUNGRY FOR YOUR FIRST ARREST!

WHAT 'RE WE GONNA DO WITH THEM, ZAROTH?

PAH! TODAY MUST BE BOOBY-PRIZE DAY! TAKE 'EM TO MY OFFICE I'LL QUESTION THEM ABOUT OTHER REAL CARGO SHIPS COMING THROUGH!

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, BROTHER ZAROTH! WOT A SURPRISE YOU GOT COMIN'!

SWIFT SECONDS LATER, AS QUESTIONS BEGIN TO FLY..

CUT THE ACT, FURA — YOU KNOW WHERE AND WHEN THOSE CARGO SHIPS ARE — WHAT WAS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE GAG IS — BUT BIG OR SMALL YOU CAN'T WITHSTAND A DISINTEGRATOR RAY! THERE— THERE!

WHAT? SOMEONE PLUNGING DOWN FROM ABOVE!

DROP IT, ZAROTH! I KNEW MY PROJECTO-IMAGE WOULD FOOL YOU! MY ANTI-GRAV BOOTS KEPT ME OUT OF SIGHT!

STAR PIRATE!

HAH! WHAT'S THIS, A JOKE? LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE CUT YOU DOWN TO REAL SIZE AT LAST, STAR PIRATE!

VERY GALLANT, MISTER PIRATE, BUT HIS GUARDS ARE OUTSIDE! WE'LL NEVER GET TO MY SHIP!

YOU'RE WRONG! IF BLACKY FOLLOWED MY ORDERS... LOOK OUTSIDE, MISS COPPER!

AND OUTSIDE, GREAT FORCE RAYS SWEEP OVER ZAROTH'S MEN, RENDERING THEM HELPLESS

OUR PRISONERS—THEY'RE ESCAPING... SOMEONE'S IN THE POLICE SHIP! LOOK! AHH!

AND SOON AFTER ZAROTH'S EVIL HIDE-OUT HAS BEEN REDUCED TO DUST AND RUBBLE...

STAR PIRATE, YOU ARE MY PRISONER! I PROMISE LENIENCY IF...

CORRECTION, PLEASE! I THINK YOU HAVE YOUR LOGIC AWRY. KINDLY TELL YOUR MEN TO READY THE EMERGENCY LIFE SHIPS

SECONDS LATER...

TA TA! I TRUST YOU'LL DO THE SAME THING FOR ME, BABY!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, STAR PIRATE! SOMEDAY OUR PATHS SHALL CROSS AGAIN!

SAY, YA THINK THAT DAME MEANT WHAT SHE SAID—AH, PHOOEY ALL THAT WORK—AN' WHAT DO I GET? NOTHIN'! HEY, WHAT'RE YA DOIN'?

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A SPACE POLICE BUGGY! WE'RE HEADING BACK TO ZAROTH'S HIDE-OUT! THERE'S PLENTY OF SALVAGE LOOT—FOR MY CHARITIES!

STAR PIRATE IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!!

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 of PLANET COMICS, published bi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1948.

State of New York, County of New York, ss

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared J. F. Byrne, who, having been duly sworn, according to law, deposes and says that he is the Managing Editor of the PLANET COMICS, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily, weekly, semiweekly or triweekly newspaper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Love Romances Pub. Co., Inc., 670 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Editor, none; Managing Editor, J. F. Byrne, 670 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Business Manager, T. T. Scott, 670 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Love Romances Pub. Co., Inc., 670 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; J. G. Scott, 670 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the twelve months preceding the date shown above is . . . . (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

(Signed) J. F. BYRNE, *Managing Editor.*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1948.

(Signed) LIONEL G. MOORE, *Notary Public.*

(My commission expires March 30, 1950.)

Life on other Worlds

A TRIP TO THE MOON

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN THE TRIP TO THE MOON? YOU HAVEN'T? WELL, LET'S HURRY! WE JUST HAVE TIME TO CLIMB INTO OUR SPACE SUITS AND CATCH THE PLANETARY CRUISER THAT'S ROARING ON THE LAUNCHING PLATFORM RIGHT NOW! DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T BE GONE LONG. AFTER ALL, IT'S ONLY 238,000 MILES FROM EARTH—ONE WAY!

LET'S VISIT WITH THE CREW AS THEY PREPARE THE SPACER FOR ITS JOURNEY. IT'S THE USUAL PRE-TAKE-OFF HUSTLE AND BUSTLE. CABIN AIR PRESSURE MUST BE REGULATED BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ANY AIR OR MOISTURE ON THE MOON AND ATOMIC FUEL TANKS MUST BE CHECKED—THE USUAL PRECAUTIONS. WAIT—DO YOU FEEL THOSE VIBRATIONS? YOU BETTER FASTEN YOUR SAFETY BELT, THE PILOT HAS JUST SIGNALLED FOR THE TAKE-OFF!

HERE WE GO! JUST THINK, WE'RE TRAVELING AT THE RATE OF 25,000 MILES AN HOUR NOW! WE HAVE TO MOVE AT THIS TREMENDOUS SPEED OR WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO OVERCOME THE EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL! IF YOU DON'T THINK WE'RE COVERING ANY GROUND, JUST GLANCE OUT OF THE PORT HOLE AND LOOK AT OLD MOTHER EARTH! IT LOOKS LIKE THE SMALL GLOBE YOU SEE IN SCHOOL WITH ALL THE LAND MASSES AND BODIES OF WATER CLEARLY OUTLINED!

HOLD ON, NOW, WE'RE GETTING CLOSER TO THE MOON. DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH FROM HERE, DOES IT? ALL YOU CAN SEE ARE LIGHT AND DARK AREAS. BUT YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER THAT THE MOON'S SURFACE IS COVERED WITH LUNAR CRATERS, SOME 64 MILES IN CIRCUMFERENCE AND 18,000 FEET IN DEPTH! AND THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS HERE ARE LOFTY. BUT WAIT, THE PILOT'S CUT OFF THE JETS. WE'RE BEING PULLED NOW BY THE MOON'S GRAVITY ALONE. IT WON'T BE LONG NOW BEFORE WE PLANT OUR FEET ON MOON GROUND!

THE MOON—AT LAST! WATCH YOUR STEP GETTING OUT OF THE SPACER—AND BE SURE YOUR BOOT WEIGHTS ARE HEAVY ENOUGH. DON'T FORGET SURFACE GRAVITY HERE IS ONLY ONE SIXTH THAT OF EARTH. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WEIGHED 150 LBS. ON EARTH YOU'D ONLY WEIGH 25 LBS. ON THE MOON. TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, SUPPOSE YOU WERE A HIGH JUMPER ON THE SCHOOL TRACK TEAM AND COULD CLEAR THE HIGH BAR AT 5 FEET! WELL, ON THE MOON, YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO CLEAR THE BAR A 35 FEET! WAIT A MINUTE, I THINK THE CREW IS GOING TO TAKE SOME METEOROGICAL DATA: LET'S JAG ALONG:

AFTER THEY'VE MEASURED SOME OF THE CRATERS AND MOUNTAIN RANGES, I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO RECORD THE EXACT AMOUNT OF ILLUMINATION FOUND HERE. NORMALLY, THE MOON REFLECTS ONLY ABOUT ONE-FOURTEENTH OF THE TOTAL SUNLIGHT THAT FALLS UPON IT. IN FACT, THE OVER-ALL BRIGHTNESS OF THE MOON IS CALCULATED TO EQUAL A 100 CANDLE-POWER LAMP AT A DISTANCE OF 22 YARDS! NOT VERY BRIGHT, IS IT? WELL, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH OUR BOYS ARE ABOUT FINISHED WITH THEIR MEASUREMENTS. WE MAY AS WELL GET BACK TO THE SHIP.

WE'RE HEADED BACK TO EARTH NOW! YOU NOTICE WE DON'T NEED QUITE THE SPEED WE USED WHEN WE BLASTED OFF FROM EARTH A LITTLE WHILE AGO. YOU BETTER KEEP THOSE WEIGHTS ON YOUR BOOTS THOUGH! SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO SOMETHING NOT TIED DOWN? THAT GUN, PACKAGE, PENCIL, EVEN THE WATER FROM A GLASS, ARE ALL SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR! THE REASON FOR THAT IS AS THE ROCKET SHIP FALLS TOWARD THE EARTH, EVERYTHING FLOATS WITHOUT WEIGHT!

THERE SHE IS AGAIN—THE EARTH! BUT DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO LAND IMMEDIATELY. WHY IF THE PILOT TRIED AT THE SPEED WE'RE HITTING NOW, WE'D GO RIGHT THROUGH THE GROUND TO THE EARTH'S CORE. FIRST, YOU'LL BE GOING ON SEVERAL TRIPS AROUND THE WORLD SO THAT WE CAN REDUCE OUR SPEED ENOUGH TO ATTEMPT A SAFE LANDING. WE'LL BE IN SOON, AND SAY, IF YOU ENJOYED THE RIDE, MAYBE WE COULD VISIT MARS OR JUPITER TOGETHER SOMETIME. IT SHOULD BE FUN!

THE END!

AURO

by DICK CHARLES

"THE MARVEL OF THE MILLENNIUM! ONE MAN MA-CUN AGAINST THE MONSTERS OF THE FOREST OF ARAR! YOU'VE GOT TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT! COME ONE, COME ALL! THE WONDER OF THE TENTH ERA OR PLANET MORVO!" TINKLE CRONCH'S EARDED TO THE BOOTH AS THE CARNIVAL BARKER'S VOICE SHOUTED ON...

RIGHT THIS WAY! GET YOUR TICKETS HERE! STEP INSIDE THE GIANT DOME!

PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ALL! FIVE METERS THICK PLASTA GLASS TO PROTECT YOU FROM HORRORS WITHIN, FOLKS! TEN AMAN POWER SCOPES SO ALL CAN SEE THE AMAZING SIGHTS. TAKE YOUR SEATS NOW!

HEY HERE, SALA - WHAT WHERE IN THIS CARNIVAL I KNOW IT. I'VE BEEN TRAPPED OFF HE'S THE ONE WE WANT

IT'S AN ENTRANCE FOR US IF YOU'RE A GIANT, ARIAS BUT WHAT ARE WE DOING INSIDE THIS FANTASTIC FREAK SHOW?

WHILE WITHIN A SIDE CHAMBER NEAR THE GIANT PLEXI-DOME...

CLAMP THE RESTRAINING ELECTRODES I AM READY WITH THE CONTROLO-DEVICE.

QUICKLY! IT'S NEARLY SHOW TIME WORKER AURO HAS TO TREAT THE BRUTE SO ZARIXA CAN HANDLE HIM.

IT'S DONE! THE RADAR TUBE ATTACHED TO ITS BRAIN WILL FORCE IT TO OBEY THE TRAINER'S ELECTRA WHIP.

BACK, AURO! YOU'RE TOO NEAR THE EDGE! YOU'RE SLIPPING.. OOOH...

LOOK OUT! WORKER AURO WILL BE PINNED ON THE HORNS OF THE ASTRA MONSTER!

ALAS, AURO! YOU NEVER HEED ME, THE DEAD CHIEF EOSON, YOUR OWN BRAIN! AH.. HE MISSES!

OWN MY HEAD.. JUST MISSED THE POISON TUSKS. BUT 'TIS NOTHING.

NOTHING? AURO, MIGHTY LORD OF JUPITER, CHANCING DEATH IN A CHEAP CARNIVAL SHOW? NOTHING, INDEED!

WORKER AURO! ZARIXA'S ON HER WAY. SHE WANTS YOU.

YOU'RE TO BE MY DRIVER TODAY, WORKER AURO THE MONSTERS ARE ALL RIGGED FOR THE ACT MY LASH IS CHARGED ARE YOU READY?

AYE, ZARIXA! THE JET CAR IS YONDER!

GOOD! HEAD FOR THE ARENA!

AYE, ALBADY DOES THE ANNOUNCER DESCRIBE THE SPACE BEASTS IN THE GIANT DOME.

THERE THEY GO, ATTENDANT THORX. I WOULDN'T BE IN ZARIXA'S BOOTS FOR A MILLION GOLDEN DRACAS!

NOR I. ORG THE MONSTERS HAVE BEEN ACTING UP WE MAY HAVE TROUBLE - GREAT TROUBLE!

AS, NEARBY, AT THE CARNIVAL DOME...

...AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN YOU WILL SEE THE HORRORS THAT ONE AND ONLY ZARXA WILL COMBAT! LIGHT NUMBER ONE, PLEASE!

"BEHOLD, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE SLOBBERING BLUBBER MONSTER OF MARS! HIS BREATH IS POISON, HIS FANGS SPELL DEATH! BUT HOLD YOUR SEATS — LIGHT NUMBER TWO IS NEXT!"

THERE'S THE SECOND BRUTE, MELG! I DON'T FEEL TOO SAFE EVEN AS A SAFETY GUARD HERE ON TOP OF THE DOME!

YOU'RE RIGHT, GORD, AND I DON'T TRUST THE CONTROL GADGETS THEY PUT ON THOSE BEASTS EITHER. HERE COMES THE THIRD ONE!

UGH, WHAT A MASS OF SLIME AKIM! I THOUGHT WE CAME HERE TO FIND THE MAN WE ARE LOOKING FOR..

PATIENCE, SALA. WE'LL FIND HIM SOMEWHERE IN THIS CARNIVAL. I KNOW IT.

AND NOW LIGHT NUMBER FOUR. BEHOLD! THE GILA BRUTE FROM THE SWAMPS OF VENUS! NO ONE HAS EVER ESCAPED HIS CLUTCHES! YET HOLD!

THE SIGNAL GONG STRIKES! TURN YOUR EYES TO THE ENTRANCE GATES AND SEE THE BEAUTIFUL MAID WHO WILL BATTLE THESE SPACE DEVILS SINGLE-HANDED —

ZARXA! SOON WILL SHE MOUNT THE JET PLATFORM TO FACE THE KILLER HORDE ALONE! WATCH HER AND BE AMAZED!

WE APPROACH THE CENTER ARENA, ZARIXA! ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE ACT?

ONE MOMENT, WORKER AURO. FIRST THE USUAL ADJUTMENTS...

THERE! THE DIAL IS SET ON MY CONTROL SHIP!

AYE, NOW WILL I BLAST THE HIDDEN FUMES TO BETTER DULL THE MONSTERS' BRAINS.

'TIS DONE! THE AUDIENCE CANNOT SEE THE TRICKERY WE USE TO MAKE THE BEAST BATTLES HARMLESS.

AYE, WORKER AURO, YET THE BRUTES ARE STILL DANGEROUS. WELL, HERE I GO...WISH ME LUCK.

HERE COMES THE FIRST ONE AT ME. GOT TO MAKE THIS LOOK REAL. HE'S RUSHING FORWARD..!

AHH...THE ATO CONTROLS MAKE HIM RETREAT. HERE COMES THE BULGO MONSTER...

ALL'S WELL SO FAR...WHAT! THE BRUTE WON'T OBEY MY WHIP! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!

BEHOLD, GUARO — WORKER AURO BLINKS THE DANGER LIGHTS. ZARIXA'S IN PERIL!

OUR BLAST RAYS WILL NEVER STOP THE BEAST IN TIME! THAT MONSTER'S GOING TO KILL HER!

AURO! SAVE [illegible]!

NAY! I C[illegible] THE CHARGE DEVICE HAS FAILED. THERE IS BUT ONE THING TO DO!

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

LEAP! LEAP TO THE GROUND! HE WILL ESCAPE TO THE SIDE DOOR THROUGH THE TREES! I WILL FIGHT OFF THE MONSTER!

WE'RE ALMOST TO THE DOOR, WONDER GIRL! HURRY! HURRY!

THERE! YOU ARE SAFE, ZAR'V[illegible]

HIS HEAD ON THE SIDE GIRDER! THE MONSTER

I CANNO' SAVE MYSELF... OOON..

SWIFTLY

THE GATES CLOSED OUT THE MONSTER JUST IN TIME BUT THIS WORKER MUST GO TO THE HOSPITAL NURSE!

ALAS I WARNED YOU AURO! YOU NEVER NEED ME!

ABOVE

SALA! HE'S OUR MAN! HE MUST BE! GET DOWN THERE AND DO WHAT I TELL YOU!

RIGHT, AKIM! WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

OON

ALL RIGHT, NURSES! TAKE HIM AWAY! THIS WORKER NEEDS MUCH CARE!

THEY DON'T SUSPECT ME IN THIS OUTFIT HERE'S MY CHANCE...

AHH AKIM WANTS ME TO SNEAK HIM THIS DISC FROM THE WORKER'S NECK. I DON'T SEE HOW THIS PLAIN PIECE OF METAL CAN HELP US OUT...

LATER IN A HIDDEN LABORATORY..

A PLAIN METAL DISC, EH SALA? WAIT TILL I ENLARGE IT ON THE SCREEN WITH THE X-RAY BEAM. WATCH!

WHY, AKIM! A SECRET ENGRAVING! SOME KIND OF ROYAL EMBLEM...

ROYAL IS RIGHT, SALA! THAT'S THE CREST OF THE RULING CLAN OF JUPITER. I'VE FOUND MY MAN!

WORKER AURO, IS IT? HAH! ON JUPITER THEY CALL HIM LORD AURO! WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW HE'S STILL ALIVE! I TELL YOU, SALA WITH THIS LITTLE DISC I'M GOING TO CARVE AN EMPIRE FOR BOTH OF US!

JUPIT REX

AURO IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

VARNOG OF VENUS

By THORNECLIFFE HERRICK

TAQUOR caught the chin of the squat man a glancing blow with his knuckles. He fell squirming in the wet sand along a quay on the upper sea of Venus, his bullet head plowing an ugly furrow in the pink gravel.

"You'll never get them, Varnog! I know you now—know your fat hulk, your yellow piglet eyes, your flabby windsail ears. That was your one chance to snatch the Dia-gems of Jupiter, the knowledge that I didn't know your face—I, the only one besides yourself who knows of their existence!"

Taquor stared down at the grimacing face of hatred that leered at him from the shoreline. He must memorize that face—the cruel countenance of Varnog, cold bio-chemist master of the Ep-labs of Venus: the man who had flattened his tinsel, trumpet-coned ears against an oxy-vent in the chamber wall long ago as Taquor's father lay dying and gasping out his heritage to a sobbing son. A priceless heritage, it was. Glittering Dia-gems buried in a high cove on the northern shores of Jupiter, discovered by a pioneering father, willed to Taquor, the son.

The croaking words of ten years past echoed yet in Taquor's mind: "Go not on the trail of the jewels, my son. Go not until ye know the image of Varnog of Venus. That evil one knows of them, knows that *I* found their hiding place. He came to me in a dream the other night. I feel he lingers in the palace and will follow you to the ends of the solar system, realizing I have told you their location on my death bed! Beware, my son! Beware of Varnog! Find him! Learn well the ugly lines of his face that ye may be prepared when once ye clutch the wealth I will to thee, my boy! Farewell!"

The face glared at him now. The face that took ten years to find. The face he would never forget.

The forehead slid back to a bony mass at the back of his head, a shape not unlike that of the great anthropoid apes that roamed planet earth in the dim past. A yellow glow shot from narrow slits that were eyes. The ears were paper-thin and shaped like hearts. They were nearly as large as Varnog's entire head. The nose was a snout, long and thick, weaving in the sea breeze like the trunk of a mastodon. The skin glinted like waxy papyrus. The lips quivered like two lumps of rubber.

He would remember *that* face.

"Clever, eh, Taquor? Like your fool father, eh? Then hear my oath! I will touch the jewels before you! Your fingers will not be the first to clasp the wealth of Jupiter! Too long have I probed the mysteries of the ancients in my laboratory. Too much of their power is mine!"

He spat the last words, groveled forward on clawing hands and sprung in one last leap of desperation. Taquor toppled to the sand, cracking his plasta helmet against a beached aqua shell. His oxygen meter dial wavered at zero. His space ship, the only avenue of escape, rested two hundred yards farther down the beach.

Panting in short sucking gasps, Taquor twisted from underneath Varnog's bulk. He dug his elbow sharply in the scientist's blubbery chest and leaped free.

Then he ran, his glazed eyes fastened only on the spacer ahead. Yet a short yelp of fear made him turn as his foot caught the first rung of the entrance ladder. He turned and stared down the pink expanse of Venusian shoreline.

A small animal was scampering toward him, a gold collar about its neck. The beast was small and lithe as a baby gazelle. It stopped short, looked at Taquor an instant, wailed in lonely fright and leaped within the space ship.

Taquor slammed the port, shoved forward the starter fuel lever and angled upwards the take-off flaps. He slid open a plasta observation panel and shouted to a brooding figure that glared at him across the sands.

"You're done, Varnog! You're finished! See here, master scientist! Even your pet pachra dog has slipped your greedy fingers!"

As he spoke, Taquor lifted a barking, furry thing in his hands, held it high for the figure on the beach to see, then slammed shut the transparent panel and roared his discharge turbines to full blast.

Taquor nosed his ship toward Jupiter. Ten years he had waited to make this trip. Ten years to learn the dark features of Varnog. He knew now. He knew the jewels would soon be his. Taquor smiled. A smooth wet nose nudged his side. The dog-shaped pet of Varnog's yawned contentedly and went to sleep by his feet.

The climb was almost vertical. It seemed to Taquor as though he had been walking for eternity. The cutting rays of Jupiter's dawn

sun made his eyes water. He turned slightly and gazed at his spacer nestled in the valley far below. It had been very simple, almost too simple after ten years of thinking about it, after finally seeing the ape face of Varnog. He was there! He was climbing to that wind-swept cove he had dreamed of so often! He was climbing to the fabulous Dia-gems of Jupiter!

No trouble on the short hop from Venus to Jupiter. No trouble spotting the mountain from his father's yellowed chart. No trouble getting a guide. Not even trouble with the tiny dog thing he had become fast friends with.

He looked at the furry beast trotting beside him. Funny, it didn't seem as happy as during the lazy hours in the space ship during the journey to Jupiter. Its head hung low. Varnog's pet looked sick.

Taquor turned his gaze to the guide plodding in silence ahead of him. He'd said his name was Ak, a sturdy peasant farmer from the valley who knew the mountain trails from childhood. He was a giant of a man with large honest eyes, a high forehead jutting forward, small well-formed ears. His complexion was ruddy with long days behind the electra plow in the valley below, where Taquor had found him.

A mournful whine made Taquor stare sharply at the dog-shaped pet. He gasped.

The tiny animal had fallen to its side. It seemed to wheeze in pain. Taquor blinked his eyes. What was this? This wasn't the dog thing he had come to know. It was something different. It was slowly changing! The pointed dog ears were rounding, extending, turning white! They were suddenly rabbit's ears. The black nose turned reddish, sprouting whiskers. The hound legs grew shorter, fatter, more curled and furry, and jerked nervously—like rabbit's legs! The pet animal was transforming to another beast before his eyes!

Lost thoughts flooded his brain. Varnog—king of the Venus Ep-labs—notes in the scientists' annual—experiments in world atmospheres—injections to stimulate the blood stream to change by itself, orientating without artificial stimulation to new atmosphoids, new planets, new existences!

Varnog had received medals for his work. No need for various adapto oxy-helmets. The body altered by itself to new shapes to suit new climates. So, thought Taquor, the devilish Varnog had experimented on his own pet to achieve his ends. He shuddered. The little beast was a semi-rabbit creature curled in the mountain rock. It lay still, in a coma.

A shout from above snapped Taquor's gaze from the grotesque sleeping thing. The guide had found something. Honest Ak's hearty peasant voice echoed down to him, deep and hollow. He had stumbled upon the cove! He had found the Dia-gems, encrusted with astra salt so that only Taquor would know their true value! Another shout. Taquor raced forward.

He rounded a grano ledge and paused. Ahead of him, standing on a ledge outside a narrow cave entrance was Ak. The good natured peasant, legs spraddled apart to support himself, held aloft great hunks of salt-caked rock. Only Taquor knew the value of them. Yet Ak was laughing—insanely.

Taquor called to him. The giant peasant paused a moment, noticed Taquor, slid the rock hunks behind his back quickly and snarled in vicious contempt. What was the matter with the fellow? He couldn't have guessed the value of the rough stone pieces and let greed seize his peasant soul.

Taquor advanced, called again to the giant. Ak hunched over slightly, grunted angrily, his eyes narrowing to slits. A vague yellow gleam seemed to glint from behind the thin lids. Taquor stood thunderstruck. He suddenly guessed the answer!

He tensed with anger, tightened his fists and sprang forward, churning his feet into the rough Jupiter ledge beneath him. The giant Ak blinked in surprise. Taquor dove at his legs, wrapped his arms behind the peasant's knees and twisted him to the ground. The two struggled in silence.

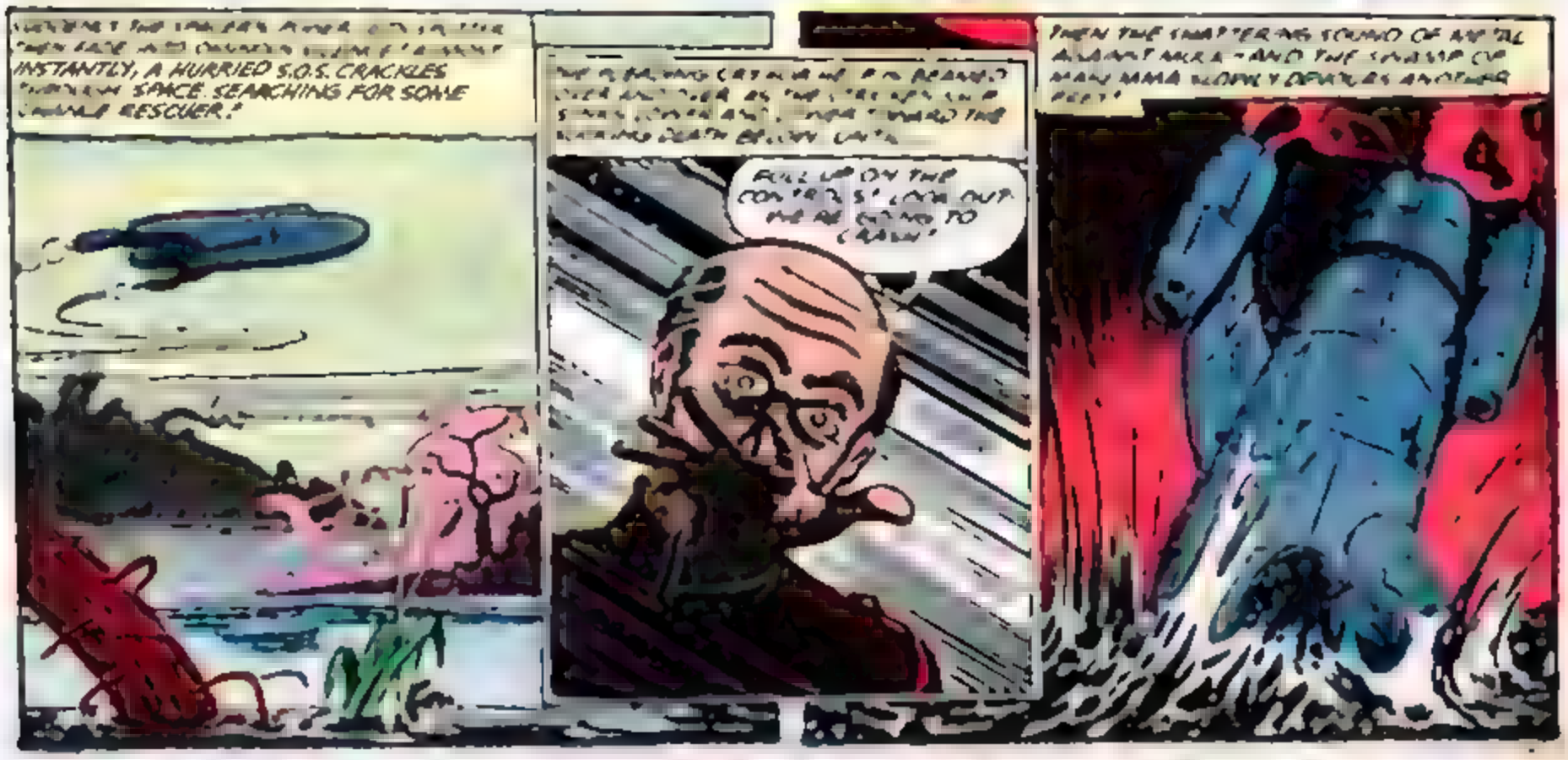
Ak furiously struck his attacker's shoulders with the sharp edges of salt rock he clenched in his hands. Taquor groaned. But with a jerk he suddenly kicked the giant free of him. He flailed madly with his fists, not knowing whether or not the blows met their mark. The bleeding giant stumbled back, dropping the jagged rocks to the ground. Back, back and then Taquor had him on the ledge brink. A five thousand foot drop was inches behind the big peasant. A sharp, swift drive of Taquor's fist and the large man went over with a shriek. The blow had nearly split his head open, he was dying as he fell that long drop to the valley.

Yet Taquor had seen the dying man's face as he disappeared over the brink. It was the pale, waxy, ape face that would be forever branded in his memory. It was the face of Varnog of Venus!

The devil of Venus, had injected his blood stream as he had treated his pet dog thing! He had raced to Jupiter ahead of Taquor and let his body transform itself to make a crafty disguise. He would have gotten away with it, thought Taquor, except for hate—the hate that had driven his pet animal to Taquor and revealed the whole sinister plan in time to prove his final undoing.

SPACE RANGERS

by HUGH FITZHUGH


INSTANTLY, A HURRIED S.O.S. CRACKLES THROUGH SPACE SEARCHING FOR SOME
ROLL UP ON THE CONTROLS! LOOK OUT! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!
THEN THE SHATTERING SOUND OF METAL AGAINST ROCK - AND THE SWAMP OF MARSHMA SLOWLY DEVOURS ANOTHER PREY!

MEANWHILE...

AH-HUM - SOMETIMES I GET AWFULLY WEARY OF THESE SAFETY PATROLS, MERC. NO ACTION, NO EXCITEMENT, JUST...HEY, WAIT - THE TELESCREEN!

GOSH FLINT LOOK! A SAUCER - IT'S CRASHED ON MAREMMA! WHAT'LL WE DO?

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE CAN DO, MERC! I'LL FEED THIS BABY A LITTLE EXTRA POWER! MAYBE WE CAN GET DOWN IN TIME TO PICK UP SOME SURVIVORS!

WHAT SURVIVORS, FLINT? WHY, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE A CHANCE ON THAT SWAMP PLANET!

AND AS FLINT'S SAUCER SPEEDS TOWARD MAREMMA, ANXIOUS EYES SCAN THE BUBBLING, SEETHING SURFACE BELOW, SEARCHING FOR SIGNS OF LIFE. SUDDENLY.

GOOD LORD, MERC, DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE DOWN THERE?

YES - YET BUT AN INSTANT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

BULL'S EYE, MERC, THAT'S ONE LESS MONSTER TO WORRY ABOUT! I ONLY HOPE WE CAN BLAST THE OTHERS!

QUICK, FLINT, TURN THE RAY ON THAT VIPERINE - IT'S GONNA STRIKE!

AS BELOW.

I SURE PULLED A BONEHEAD STUNT - STRUGGLING WITH ARCON FOR CONTROL OF THE SPACER! WE CRACKED UP ON THIS SWAMP NOW HE'S ON THE BOTTOM SOMEWHERE - AND I'M IN THIS MESS!

WHAT! THAT NOISE...

GOT HIM, MERC! COME ON, LET'S GO DOWN. IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE CHASED THE OTHERS!

AH - MY LUCK'S TURNED. IT'S A RANGER RESCUE SHIP! GOOD THING I HAVE ARCON'S PAPERS ON ME! THE FOOL'S WON'T SUSPECT A THING!

SWIPE!

THE POOR DEVILS PASSED OUT FROM EXHAUSTION! HERE - GIVE ME A HAND! MAYBE WE CAN GET THE WHOLE STORY, WHEN HE COMES AROUND!

DON'T WORRY, RANGER, YOU'LL GET YOUR STORY ALL RIGHT. AND WHEN YOU DO - MY LITTLE SCHEME CAN'T MISS!

AND WHAT A STORY IT WAS! EVEN FLINT WAS TAKEN IN BY THE TRAGIC RECITAL OF THE CRASH, AS IT TUMBLED FROM THE QUIVERING LIPS OF THE OLD SPACE CAPTAIN AS IF TO CATCH IT, A FULL REPORT FROM SPACER HEADQUARTERS IDENTIFIED THE MAN AS CAPTAIN ARCON, COMMANDER OF THE LOST CRAFT, AND ORDERED FLINT BAKER TO MAKE IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS TO OUTFIT A SALVAGE MISSION. WITH THE AID OF THE CAPTAIN, HE WAS TO RETURN TO THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER AND SEARCH FOR THE MILK WITH ITS PRECIOUS CARGO OF IMPERVIUM METAL. AND SOON...

SR

WELL, BAKER, AS SOON AS THAT BATHYROID IS ON BOARD WE'LL BE ABLE TO LEAVE.

YOU SEEM PRETTY ANXIOUS TO GET UNDER WAY ARCON. THAT LOAD OF IMPERVIUM YOU LOST MUST SURE MEAN A LOT TO YOU.

IT CERTAINLY DOES, BAKER! I HAD ALL MY CREDITS TIED UP IN TRANSPORTING IT TO TERRA! IF I FAIL - I'M RUINED! PERHAPS NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HOW I FEEL.

YES - BUT THIS IS STILL A RISKY BUSINESS! WE MAY RUN INTO TROUBLE! LOOK - THE CREW'S GETTING READY TO BLAST OFF!

SOON, THE WHINE OF FIRING JETS COVERS THE WATER FRONT. THEN, AN EAR-SPLITTING EXPLOSION AND THE AMPHIBIOUS CRUISER OF THE SALVAGE EXPEDITION ZOOM OFF INTO SPACE...

IF ALL GOES WELL, ARCON, WE'LL BE OVER MAREMMA'S STINKING SWAMPS IN ABOUT FIFTEEN MINOS

LATER...

IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME, ARCON, WE'RE ABOUT OVER THE SPOT WHERE YOUR SPACER WENT UNDER. RIGHT?

YES, BAKER BUT HOW CAN WE GO DOWN WITH ALL THOSE BEASTS INFESTING THE SWAMP?

SIMPLE, OLD BOY. THIS CRUISER IS EQUIPPED WITH A REPELLO-RAY. A FLICK OF THE SWITCH - AND WE'RE MONSTER-PROOF! WHAT SAY, MERC, YOU ALL SET TO GO?

YOU BET, FLINT BUT HOW ABOUT CAPTAIN ARCON? IS HE COMIN' WITH ME?

I DON'T THINK SO, MERC. HE SAID HE WASN'T FEELING WELL ENOUGH TO RISK A DIVE UNDER PRESSURE. I'LL SEND A TECHNICIAN ALONG.

GEE - THAT'S TOO BAD. HE'S SURE GONNA MISS A LOT O' FUN!

YOU FOOLS - I'VE TRICKED YOU INTO BELIEVING I'M CAPTAIN ARCON. WELL, WELL, THIS IS GOING TO BE SIMPLER THAN I THOUGHT!

LATER..

HELLO, HELLO, FLINT? WE'VE BEEN DOWN HERE FIVE MINOS NOW—AND NOT A SIGN OF THAT HULK. I'M BEGINNIN' TO FEEL LIKE A GOLDFISH! HOW'S ABOUT HOISTING THIS BATHYROID UP? I'D LIKE SOME FRESH AIR!

LOOK, HERC, ON THE VIZ-O—FLINT'S IMAGE IS STARTING TO COME IN!

HELLO, HERC—LISTEN TO ME! NONS OF YOUR SHENANIGAN'S NOW, DO YOU HEAR ME? YOU'RE STAYING DOWN THERE 'TIL YOU FIND, THAT WRECKED SHIP—OR ELSE! OKAY—GET BACK THERE IN THE MUCK AND SEARCH!

MINOS SLOWLY TICK BY AS THE PROBING BEAM OF THE BATHYROID ROVES CEASELESSLY OVER THE MURKY FLOOR OF THE SWAMP. SUDDENLY, IT'S RESTLESS MOTION STOPS. AS

THERE IT IS HERC, WE'VE FOUND IT! BUT WE BETTER SECURE IT, QUICKLY OR IT MAY SINK DEEPER IN THAT SLIME!

GOOD IDEA. I'LL START OPERATING THIS FLEXO-GRIPPER—THAT SHOULD HOLD IT!

AS ABOVE

AH—THEY'VE LOCATED MY SHIP! I HOPE THEY DON'T BUNGLE THE JOB NOW AND LOSE IT! I CAN'T STAND INCOMPETENCE. WHY, I'D...

TAKE IT EASY, ARCON, THOSE BOYS WON'T MUFF THIS JOB! KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE SCREEN. I'M GOING TO CHECK THEIR AIR PRESSURE.

HMM—HE'S CERTAINLY A GRUMPY OLD BUZZARD! CAN'T SAY THAT I LIKE HIM FOR THAT. BUT STILL, I SUPPOSE HE'S EXCITED OVER THE PROSPECT OF GETTING BACK ALL THAT IMPERVIUM!

EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE OKAY ARCON. AS SOON AS HERC GIVES THE WORD WE'LL HAUL UP THE... WAIT—THAT SHOUT!

HEADS UP ON DECK! THE CRANE ARM—IT'S BROKEN LOOSE!

WATCH OUT, ARCON! DUCK OR YOU'LL BE CRUSHED TO A PULP! TOO LATE.. I'LL HAVE TO MOVE FAST!

MEANWHILE...

OBOY - THIS IS GONNA BE EASY NOW. ALL I'VE GOTTA DO IS ENCIRCLE THAT SPACER WITH THESE GRIPPERS..

HEY, WATCH WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE! IF ONE OF THOSE ARMS HITS THE HULK, IT MAY SHIFT ITS POSITION!

NICE DOING BUT YOU DID IT! WATCH ARCON'LL GIVE YOU A NICE FAT REWARD FOR SUCH A PROFESSIONAL PIECE OF WORK!

GOSH! I SURE HOPE SO, ARGOS! BUT HOLD ON, LOOK OVER THERE!

HERE'S HOPING THIS DIS-RAY KNOCKS THAT CRANE AWAY FROM ARCON!

PHEW! — I GOT IT JUST IN TIME, BUT I DIDN'T KNOCK IT FAR ENOUGH. IT'S STRUCK ARCON ON THE SHOULDER!

OOH!

YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, ARCON, THAT ARM COULD'VE KILLED YOU! AS IT IS YOU'VE ONLY SUFFERED A GLANCING BLOW AND A TORN TUNIC! HOW'S YOUR SHOULDER?

IT - IT'S ALL RIGHT! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE! I THINK I'LL GO TO MY CABIN AND LIE DOWN!

LATER, IN ARCON'S QUARTERS.

ARCON SURE IS A QUEER DUCK. THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE BACK OF MY MIND I KEEP TRYING TO REMEMBER.. I'VE GOT IT! HIS SHOULDER... THE PAPERS SAID HE HAS A SCAR. HMM - I DIDN'T SEE ANY? I THINK I'LL LOOK INTO THAT - RIGHT NOW!

SNAP

AT THAT MOMENT

HERC CALLING CRUISER! HAUL US UP QUICK! WE DISCOVERED A DEAD BODY DOWN HERE. WE'RE BRINGING IT UP WITH US!

LUCKY THING I CAME BACK ON DECK! IF THEY FIND OUT IT'S ARCON, I'M SUNK. FIRST, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS NOSEY OPERATOR, THEN THE BRAT IN THE BATHYROID!

SWEET DREAMS, SUCKER, I'LL TAKE OVER HERE! NOW FOR THAT CABLE...

OHH!

A QUICK BLAST—AND THAT BATHYROID'LL NEVER COME UP! FLINT WILL THINK IT WAS AN ACCIDENT AND RETURN HOME—EMPTY-HANDED. LATER I CAN GET MY OWN SPACER AND CREW.

THEN COME BACK FOR THE METAL BEFORE HE DOES. HE'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT... WAIT—WHAT'S THAT?

BAKER—COME ON, CHUMP, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO SEE BLAGGER START OPERATING—RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE!

WHAT? YOU—BLAGGER, THE SPACE PIRATE? THAT EXPLAINS A LOT OF THINGS!

YEAH, BUT TOO BAD YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO SEE ME FINISH! I'LL... WHAT!

NOT SO FAST, CURLY-LOCKS, YOU'RE ONE FISH THAT'S **NOT** GETTING AWAY! AND IF YOU WANT TO PLAY ROUGH...

MAYBE THIS'LL HELP CHANGE YOUR MIND! WHAT—THE GUARD RAIL ..IT'S SNAPPED!

HELP—I'M FALLING INTO THE SWAMPS! THOSE MONSTERS... THEY'RE **OHH!**

BRR—WHAT A WAY TO GO OUT! I TRIED TO BLAST THOSE BRUTES AWAY AND GET TO HIM, BUT THERE WERE TOO MANY OF THEM! I'M GLAD HERC WASN'T UP HERE TO GET UNDER MY FEET!

LATER.

GOLLY, FLINT, I NEVER THOUGHT THAT ARCON WAS A PHONEY! AND TO THINK I WAS WONDERING WHETHER HE WAS GOING TO GIVE ME SOMETHING FOR FINDING THAT DERELICT!

DON'T FRET, HERC, IF THERE'S A REWARD FOR BLAGGER'S CAPTURE, MAYBE I'LL CUT YOU IN ON IT— THAT'S IF YOU KEEP OUT OF MY HAIR FOR THE REST OF THE TRIP HOME!

SPACE RANGERS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!!

MYSTA

OF THE **moon**

By ROSS GALLUN

"REVOLT ON PLANET XANTHIA! CITIES BEING GROUND TO DUST BY OUTLAWED WEAPONS OF STARN VALDUR. WE MUST HAVE HELP!" WAS THE GRIM MESSAGE FLASHED TO DIRK GARRO, DIRECTOR OF EARTH'S SAFETY COUNCIL. IMMEDIATE ORDERS WERE RELAYED TO MYSTA—POSING AS A SAFETY TECHNICIAN—TO READY THE HMR FLEET. AND SOON, AS THEY HOVERED OVER THE STRICKEN WORLD...

WE ARE OVER XANTHIA NOW, SIR. I'LL GET YOUR SPACE SLED READY!

GOOD, TECHNICIAN. THERE'S TYRA, THE CAPITAL CITY JUST AHEAD—GREAT SCOTT! LOOK AT IT!

IT'S IN RUINS! SMASHED AND ALMOST LEVELLED BY THOSE SWEEPING RAYS!

WE HAVEN'T A MINUTE TO LOSE! COME, TECHNICIAN! BLAST US AWAY, CREWMAN!

AYE! AND LUCK BE WITH YOU, DIRECTOR GARRO, IF YOU'RE GOING TO FACE THAT DEVIL, STARN VALDUR! YOU'RE OFF!

HATCH OPEN

AS THE SPACE SLED ARCS AWAY FROM THE FLAGSHIP...

THERE, I'VE SWITCHED THE VIDEO SCANNER ON DIRECTLY INTO THE OFFICE OF XANTHIA'S RULER, THORD FARA...

YES, AND THAT'S VALDUR TALKING TO HIM AND HIS SECRETARY! LISTEN!.

GROVEL, THORD FARA. GROVEL IN THE DUST OF YOUR RUINED PLANET! GROVEL BEFORE ME, WHOM YOU BANISHED! BUT NOW, I ISSUE THE TERMS, AND THEY ARE IMMEDIATE RETREAT AND COMPLETE SURRENDER!

EMINUTES LATER, AS THE SMALL SLED LANDS AMIDST THE DUST AND RUBBLE.

QUICKLY, SIR — BEFORE FARA GIVES IN!

I'LL STOP HIM! THERE'S VALDUR...

AH! IN THE 'HOLD IT VALDUR' FARA WILL MAKE NO TERMS WITH AN OUTCAST!

DIRK GARRO — AND I SUPPOSE YOU'VE BROUGHT A WAR FLEET, EH?

GOOD! A SIGNAL TO MY MEN — AND THEY'LL BLAST YOUR WHOLE FLEET WITH ATOMIC DUST!

STOP HIM! OH, TOO LATE!

NO OUTSIDE ON A HUGE SUSPENDED-PLATE...

VALDUR'S SIGNAL! AN EARTH FLEET ABOVE — BLAST IT!

THEN, AS THE BIG ATO-CANNONS BEGIN DEATH-DUST SKYWARD, THE FLEET SHIPS ARE CAUGHT UNAWARE

ESCAPE IMPOSSIBLE, THE SHIPS' THIN HULLS ARE RIPPED AND SHATTERED BY THE DEADLY ONSLAUGHT — LEAVING ONLY A SKELETON FLEET!

BUT WATCHING ..

WHAT! VALDUR'S ATOMIC WEAPON HAS DESTROYED OUR SPACERS! WAIT— THOSE SOUNDS BEHIND ME!

HE'S DIRK GARRO, DIRECTOR OF EARTH'S SAFETY COUNCIL! GRAB HIM!

AYE, VALDUR! HE IS OURS! WHAT? THOSE RAYS— WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM? I—

QUICKLY, SIR! ESCAPE, WHILE I HOLD THEM WITH SHOCK RAY!

WE'RE TRAPPED, OUR FLEET'S DESTROYED..,

WAIT, GARRO— LOOK! FARA'S SECRETARY... SHE'S MOTIONING FOR US TO FOLLOW HER!

SWIFTLY AND SILENTLY THE MYSTERIOUS GIRL LEADS THEM TO A HIDDEN SPACE SHIP AFTER THEY TAKE OFF, SHE SETS THE COURSE FOR TANGENT B, AND SOON A HUGE SHAPE LOOMS IN THE VOID..

WELL, HERE WE ARE, TECHNICIAN. YOU AND DIRECTOR GARRO WILL BE QUITE SAFE HERE.

YES, ANA — THIS IS THE LOST FLOATING CITY OF KARNAK, SIR IT'S BEEN UNINHABITED FOR YEARS.

GOOD! I HOPE THE TRANS-UNIVERSE VIDEO STILL WORKS!

AND SOON

AH, FLEET COMMANDER BRAXO, AT LAST! THERE'S A REVOLT ON XANTHIA - VALDUR WIPED OUT MY FLEET WITH ATO-GUNS. YOU'VE GOT TO BRING UP THE IMPERVA-HULLED SUPER DREADNAUGHTS, AT ONCE!

AYE, GARRO - YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND! BUT HADN'T YOU BETTER CONSULT MYSTA FIRST? SHE'LL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS VALDUR!

WHAT! MYSTA? ARE YOU CRAZY, MAN? THIS IS A WAY OUT OF HER LINE. DO AS YOU'RE TOLD - ATTACK IMMEDIATELY!

BUT LISTENING..

HMM... STILL HIS OLD BULLHEAD SELF! BUT I'VE GOT TO CONTACT MY AIDE, BRON, ON THE MOON..

THAT'S RIGHT, BRAXO - ONLY THOSE IMPERVA-HULLS CAN WITHSTAND THE ATO-BLASTS!

MEANWHILE ON STARN VALDUR'S SUSPENDO-FORTRESS..

THEY ESCAPED. I DON'T LIKE IT VALDUR! NOW HE CAN WARN EARTH - AND THEY'LL SEND UP THE SUPER-DREADNAUGHTS!

SUPER-DREADNAUGHTS? BAH! I'LL DESTROY THOSE THE SAME AS I DID HIS FLEET!

BUT, VALDUR, YOU FORGET - THE ATO-DUST HAS NO EFFECT ON THOSE IMPERVA-HULLS!

QUIET, FOOL! THAT'S JUST WHAT I WANT HIM TO DO!

YOU SEE, IT JUST SO HAPPENS I WILL KNOW THE EXACT TIME AND THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THEY'LL COME - AIGHT INTO MY TRAP!

WHILE, BACK AT THE FLOATING CITY...

AH, OLD FAITHFUL BRON'S FACE APPEARS ON MY VIZI-PLATE.

BRON, ENTER MY ANTIQUE MUSEUM— INSTRUCT THE ROBOT TO BRING THE BIG WHIRLING DISK TO THE FLOAT— ING CITY OF VARNAK!

WHIRLING DISK? THAT OLD THING— BUT WHY?

AS ON THE MOON..

IT MAY NOT EVEN WORK! IT HASN'T BEEN USED IN— WHAT? SHE'S FADING OUT! GONE—

SWIFT SECONDS LATER...

BRR... EERIE PLACE, HAVEN'T BEEN IN HERE FOR SOME TIME. THERE'S THE DISK...

ROBOT, BOARD DISK, PILOT TO FLOATING CITY OF VARNAK, PICK UP MYSTA!

...CITY OF VARNAK, PICK UP MYSTA— (CLICK)

MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER ROOM ON VARNAK...

WELL, I ORDERED THE FLEET, BUT SOMEHOW I WONDER IF I DID THE RIGHT THING! MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE CONTACTED MYSTA!

SO YOU'RE THINKING OF CHANGING YOUR MIND, GARRO?

YES, I THINK...! OHH!

A SLIGHT CORRECTION, GARRO! I'LL DO YOUR THINKING, WHILE YOU'RE UNDER THE EFFECT OF A PARA RAY!

LATER, COMMANDER BRAXO HAS LED THE DREADNAUGHT FLEET TO A POINT NOT FAR DISTANT FROM XANTHIA; BUT BEFORE GIVING THE ATTACK SIGNAL, HE MAKES VIDEO CONTACT WITH GARRO ONCE AGAIN...

AH, THERE YOU ARE, GARRO! I KNOW OUR IMPERIAL RULES CAN WITHSTAND THE ATO-BLASTS— BUT SUPPOSE THIS VALDUR HAS SOME OTHER, MORE DEVASTATING WEAPON?

ATTACK, BRAXO! YOUR ORDERS ARE TO ATTACK! THAT IS ALL!

HMM... HIS FACE LOOKED RATHER STRANGE, HIS VOICE QUEER... BUT THOSE ARE HIS ORDERS!

MEANWHILE

FOOL! UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MY PARA-RAY, YOU'VE GIVEN THE ORDER TO YOUR FLEET — WHICH CAN ONLY END IN ITS DESTRUCTION! I— WHAT?

OH, I'M JUST IN TIME. SHE'S TURNING TOWARD THAT CABINET...

SO! YOU'RE A TRAITOR TO FARA—

TRAITOR! BAH! VALDUR AND I HAD PLANNED THIS ANNOS AGO...

TOO BAD YOU CAN'T BE AROUND TO WITNESS OUR SMASHING VICTORY OVER YOUR FLEET! THERE!

SHOCK RAY! OOH!

SWIFTLY AND ENGAGES, AND MINUTES LATER, WHEN THE FIRST EFFECTS OF THE STUNNING SHOCK RAY WEAR OFF MYSTA...

THAT SOUND! THE WHIRLING DISK! I MUST GET TO THE RAMP...

HERE IT COMES, AND THE ROBOT IS PROJECTING THE TRACTO RAY!

THEN, UP THE TRACTO BEAM GOES MYSTA, UP TO THE OPEN HATCH OF THE WHIRLING DISK...

AND MINUTES LATER...

ROBOT, SET COURSE FOR XANTHIA, READY ALL REPULSO RAYS!

(CLICK!)..XANTHIA, READY ALL REPULSO RAYS! (CLICK!)

MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE FLAGSHIP OF THE DREADNAUGHT FLEET...

WE'RE OVER XANTHIA AND —WHAT'S THAT? WHY, THEY'RE SPACE MINES! WE'RE TRAPPED— TRAPPED!"

INSTANTLY, THE ATMOS IS ALIVE WITH BLASTING SPACE MINES, GREAT DREADNAUGHTS ARE RIPPED AND SHATTERED...

AND WATCHING...

AH, YOU'VE RETURNED AT LAST, ANA! OUR PLOT WORKED WELL! VICTORY IS OURS!

YES, VALDUR! BUT LOOK!

GABAT ZEUS! AN ANCIENT WHIRLING DISK! HO, MEN, BLAST THAT CONFOUNDED ANTIQUE OUT OF THE AIR!

AT VALDUR'S COMMAND, THE ATO-CANNONS SPEW DEATH SKYWARD WITH THROATY VENGEANCE — BUT...

STOP! THE ATO-DUST HAS NO EFFECT ON IT! LOOK OUT!

AND FROM THE WHIRLING SPHERE DART TRIPLE LANCES OF REPULSO RAYS...

RAYS HAVE KNOCKED OUT MY MEN, MY GUNS! WHAT! IT WHIRLS DIRECTLY TOWARD US!

AS ABOVE...

ONE LAST MANEUVER TO DESTROY VALDUR'S SUSPENDED-PLATE, THEN I'LL PICK UP GARRO — AND YOU CAN TAKE THE WHIRLING SPHERE BACK TO MY MOON MUSEUM, ROBOT!

THE DISK PLUNGES AND THE GREAT ROTO-WHEEL GRINDS AND SHATTERS THE PLATE— IT LURCHES AND SPILLS MEN AND WEAPONS TO THE GROUND FAR BELOW...

LATER...

DIRK GARRO, MY UNDYING THANKS TO YOU! YOUR CLEVER STRATEGEM SAVED XANTHIA!

M-MY CLEVER STRATEGEM? OH, ER, THAT- AH YES! YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME, FARA...

TILL LATER...

AH, THERE YOU ARE, TECHNICIAN-ER, THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T QUITE FOLLOW-FARA THINKS I EMPLOYED THE STRATEGEM WHICH DEFEATED VALDUR. SOMEHOW I FEEL YOU KNOW MORE THAN I DO...

SURELY YOU'RE JOKING, DIRECTOR GARRO. IT WAS YOU WHO ISSUED THE ORDER FOR THE GREAT WHIRLING DISK TO COME DOWN! I BUT FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, SIR!

MYSTA OF THE MOON appears in every PLANET COMICS!

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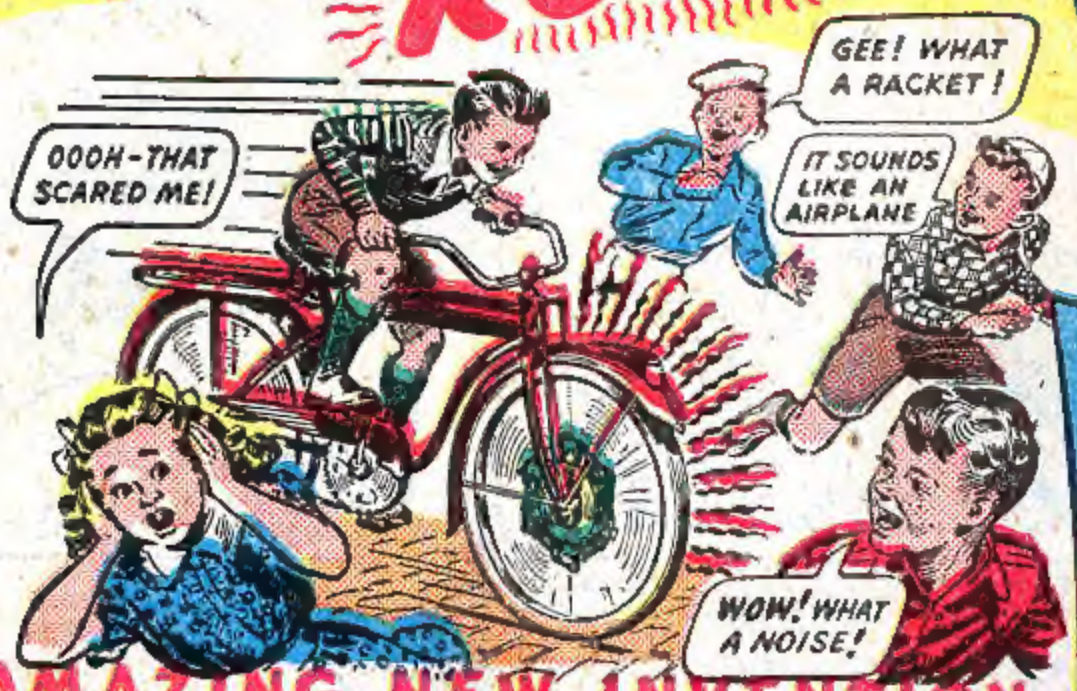

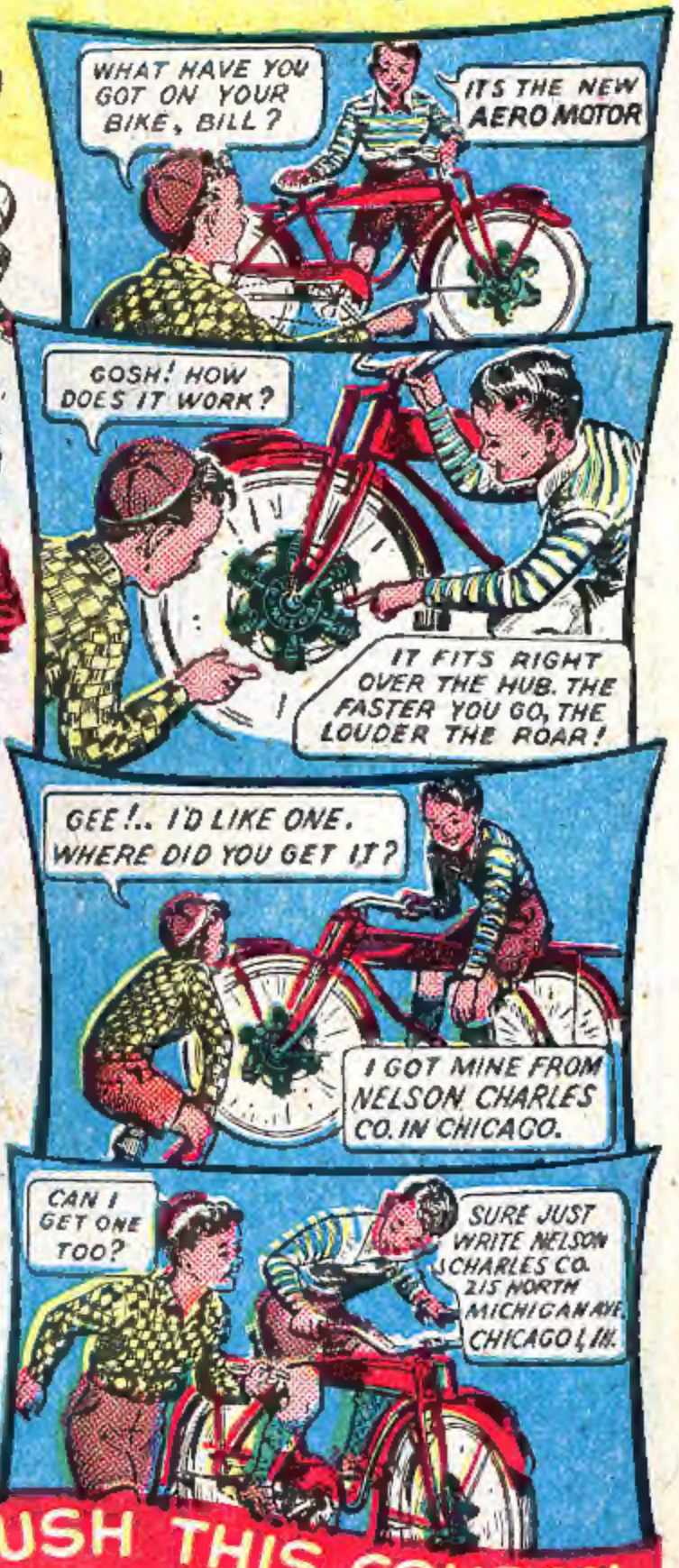
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT ON YOUR BIKE, BILL?
IT'S THE NEW AERO MOTOR
GOSH! HOW DOES IT WORK?
IT FITS RIGHT OVER THE HUB. THE FASTER YOU GO, THE LOUDER THE ROAR!
GEE!.. I'D LIKE ONE. WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
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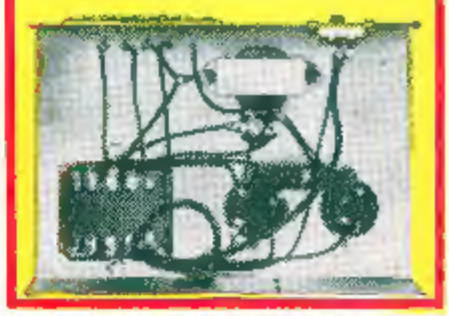

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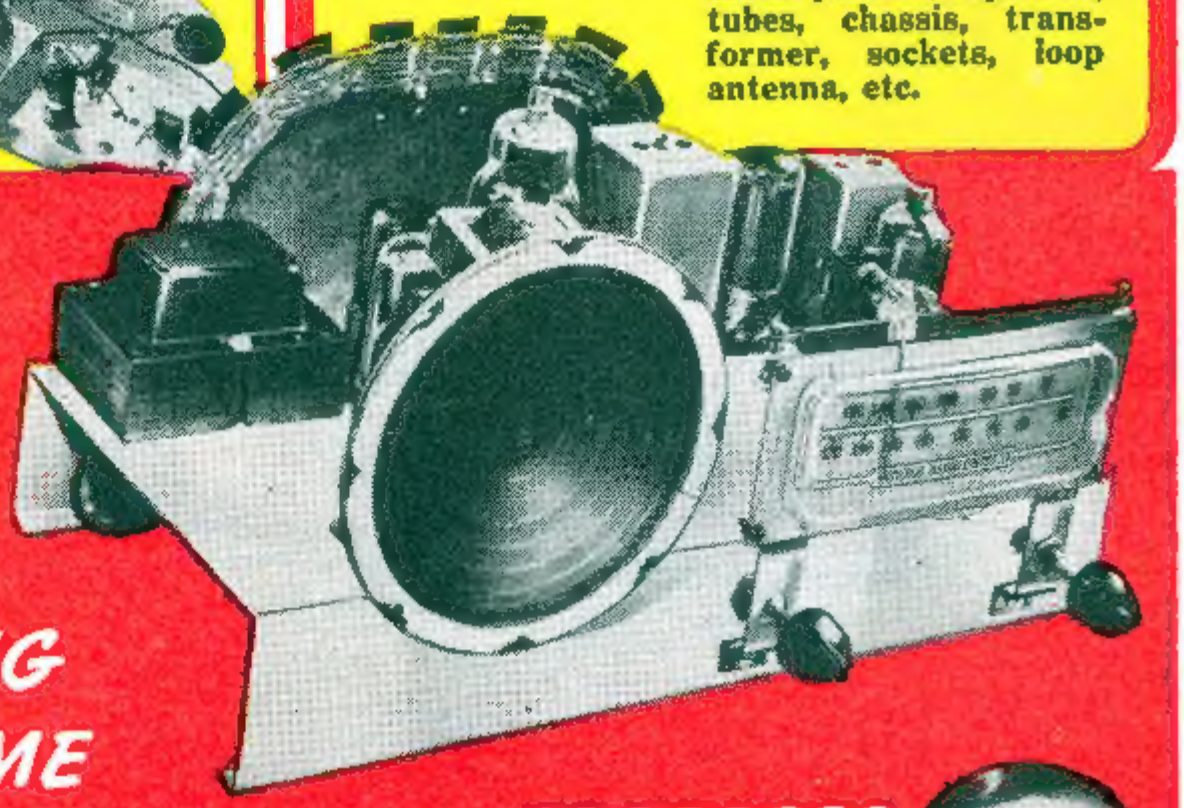

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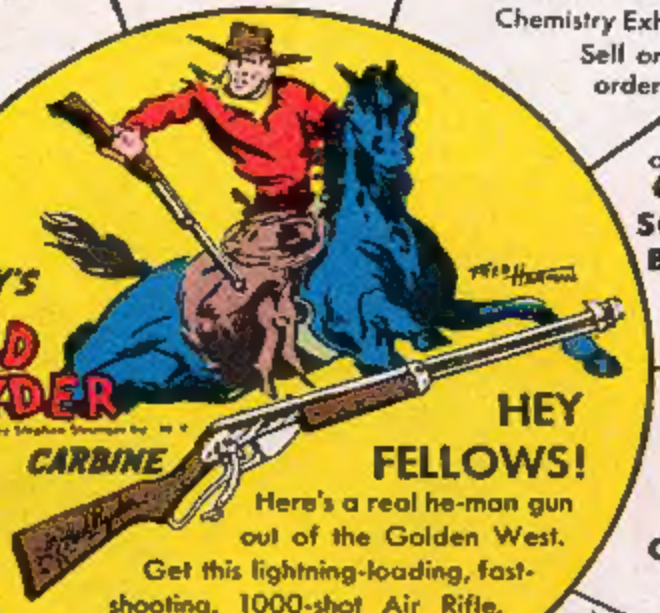
Full mirror in lid; strong lock & key. Sell one order plus $1.50 extra.

SOFT BALL SET

Official Size set. Cap, Softball and bat. Sell one order of American Seeds.

DAISY'S RED RYDER CARBINE



HEY FELLOWS!

Here's a real he-man gun out of the Golden West. Get this lightning-loading, fast-shooting, 1000-shot Air Rifle. Sell one order of American Seeds, plus $2.00 extra.

Dresser Set

Full size Comb, Brush and Mirror, beautifully decorated. Sell one order of seeds.

POCKET WATCH

Standard size, American-made, with leather Fob. Sell one order.

Campfire Ukulele

Full size. Decorated with Western scene. Clear mellow tone. Sell only one order.

Famous Texan Jr.

All Metal Cap Pistol with genuine leather Holster and Jeweled Belt. Sell one order of American Seeds.

FISHING TACKLE SET

Big 11 piece fishing outfit in metal case. Sell one order plus 75c extra.

SWEETHEART DOLL

Pert and pretty in her sweetheart gown. Sell one order of American Seeds.

DICK TRACY CAMERA

Takes 16 pictures on each roll of film, carrying case included. Sell one order of seeds.

TWO TELEPHONES

for person-to-person calls, between houses; or from floor to floor. Runs on 4 Flashlight batteries, included. Sell one order of seeds plus $2.00.

MORE PRIZES

shown in our Big Prize Sheet

- Pen and Pencil Set
- Electric Phonograph
- Flash Camera Outfit
- Boxing Gloves
- Jewelry and Clocks
- Kitchen Utensils
- Croquet Set
- Sports Equipment
- Jeweled Watches
- Dishes & Silverware
- Tool Set

OUR 31st YEAR

GET YOUR PRIZE THIS EASY WAY

Most prizes shown above and dozens of others in our Big Prize Book are given WITHOUT COST for selling only one 40-pack order of American Vegetable and Flower Seeds at 10c per large pack. Some of the bigger prizes require extra money, as stated.

Everybody wants American Seeds—they're fresh and ready to grow. You'll sell them quickly and get your prize at once, or, if you prefer, take one-third cash commission on all seeds sold. GET BUSY—send coupon today for Big Prize Book and seeds. SEND NO MONEY — WE TRUST YOU

No goods sent outside U. S. A.

American Seed Co., Inc. Dept. 837, Lancaster, Pa.

AMERICAN SEED CO., INC.,
DEPT. 837 LANCASTER, PA.

Please send the BIG PRIZE BOOK and 40 packs of Vegetable and Flower Seeds. I will resell them at 10c each, send you the money promptly, and get my prize.

My choice of prize is _____

Name _____

R. F. D. Box or Street No. _____

City _____

State _____